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THE YOUNG MAGICIAN

NARUSHIMA YURI

1

THE YOUNG MAGICIAN

Volume 1

By Narushima Yuri

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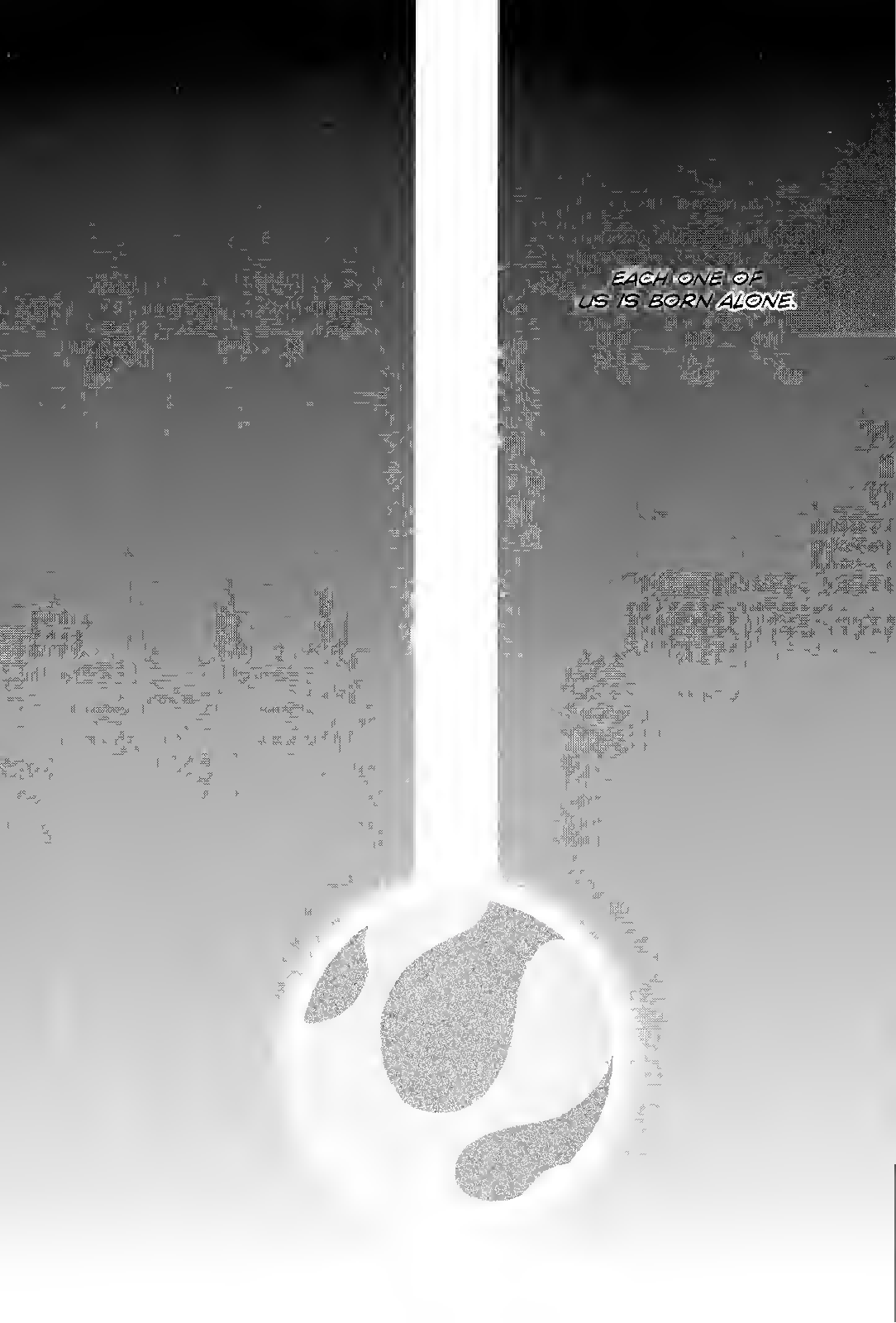
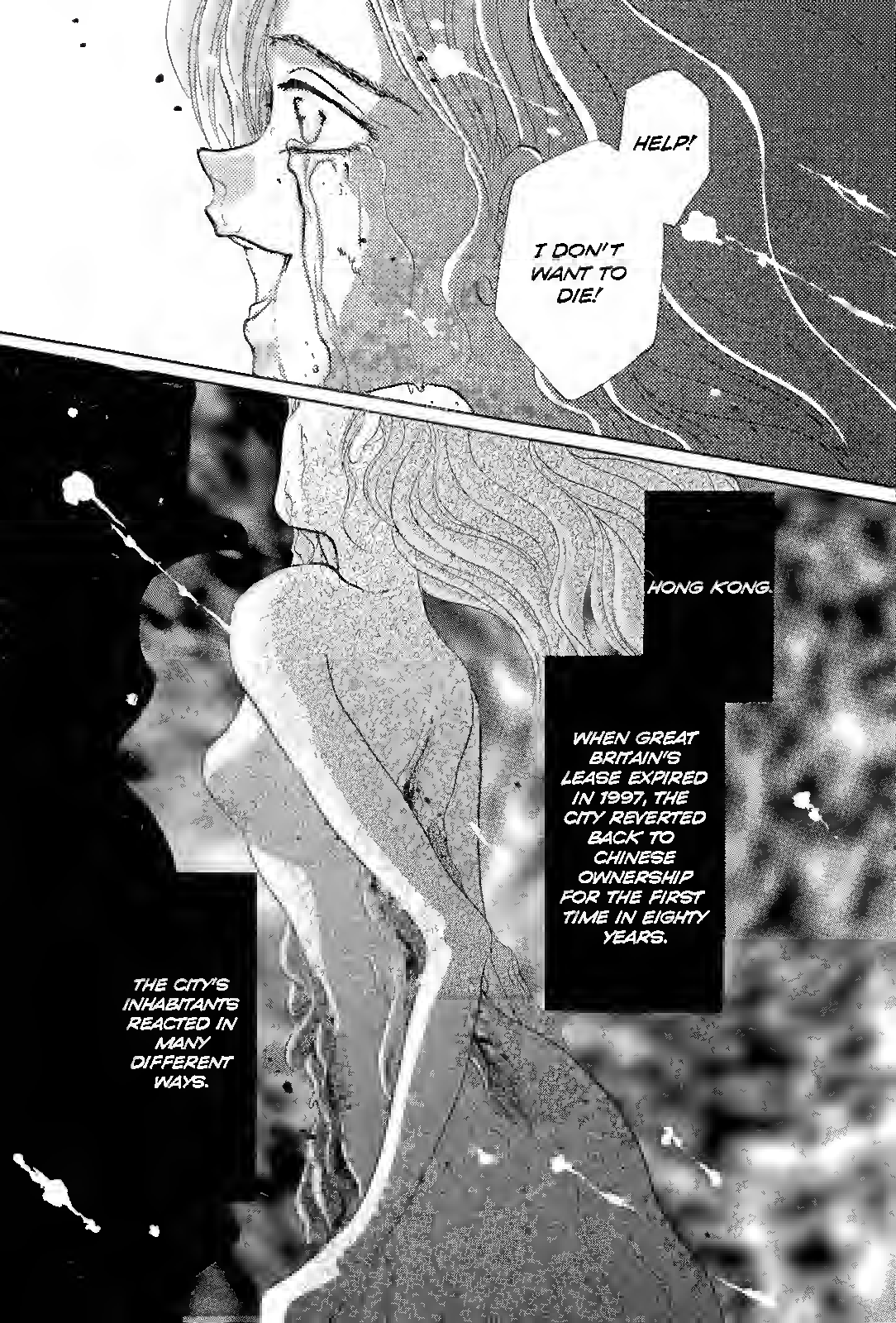

EACH ONE OF
US IS BORN ALONE.

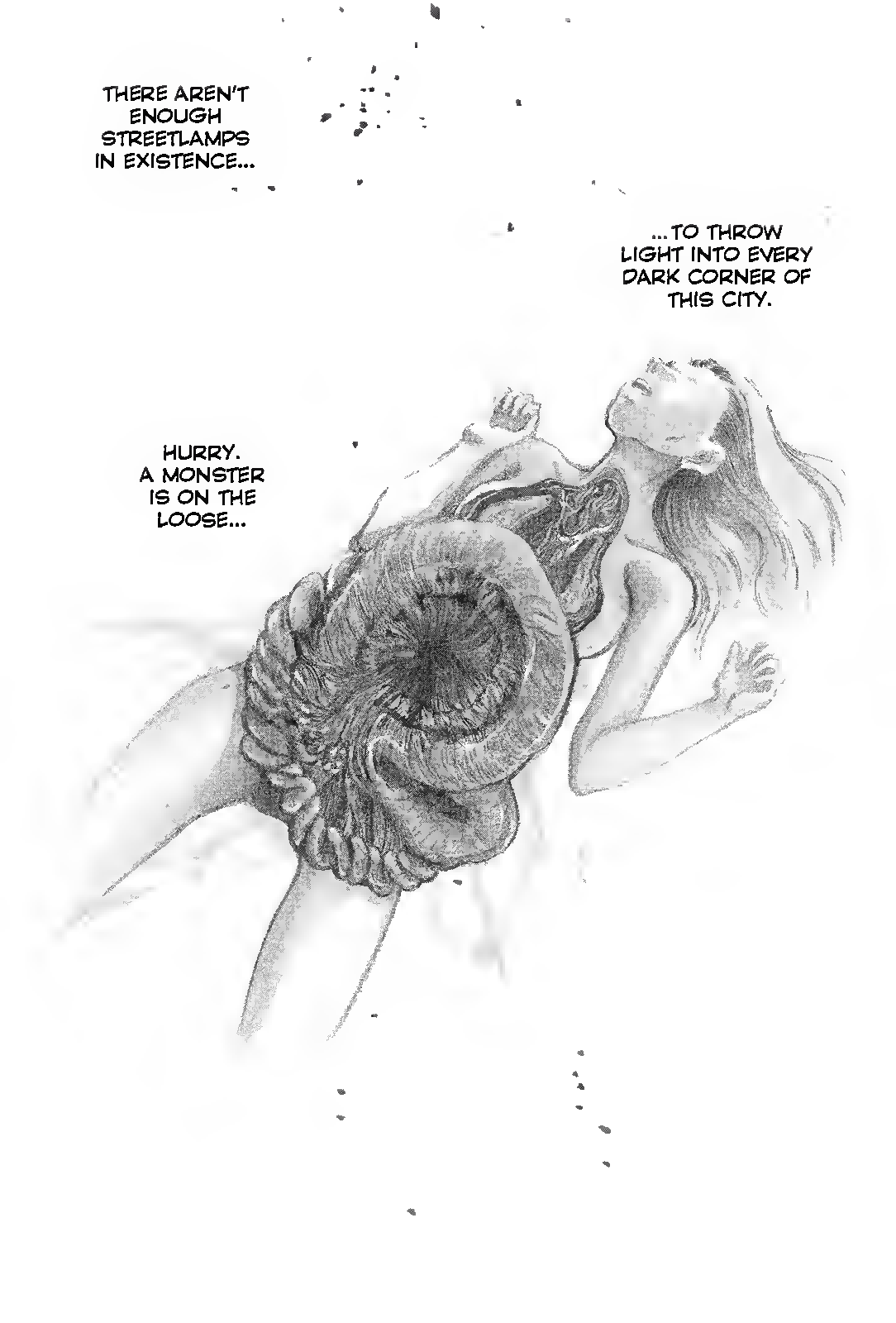
THAT MAKES
EACH ONE OF US
DIFFERENT.


HELP!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
HONG KONG.
WHEN GREAT BRITAIN'S LEASE EXPIRED IN 1997, THE CITY REVERTED BACK TO CHINESE OWNERSHIP FOR THE FIRST TIME IN EIGHTY YEARS.
THE CITY'S INHABITANTS REACTED IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS.

BUT, THEY ALL SHARED ONE THING IN COMMON: AN OBSESSION FOR SECURITY IN A SUDDENLY UNKNOWN FUTURE.

THIS IS A TRADEGY
THAT HAPPENED BEFORE
FINDING THE WAY
TO REACH YOU.

JACK THE RIPPER
IN HONG KONG.


THERE AREN'T ENOUGH STREETLAMPS IN EXISTENCE...
...TO THROW LIGHT INTO EVERY DARK CORNER OF THIS CITY.
HURRY. A MONSTER IS ON THE LOOSE...

HONG KONG: 1996
WHAT A CITY... IT'S LIKE A TOY CHEST TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.
OR LIKE A JEWELRY BOX. SO BEAUTIFUL...
...AH, HONG KONG.
...THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS...
WSSSSSSSSSH!

CAN YOU HEAR ME...
...MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS?
I AM ROSALITE. ROSALITE GUINO.
WSSS

WSSSSSSSH
...THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY.
THE BOY YOU SENT ME IS PERFECT.
ROSA-LITE.
YOU ARE OUR FINEST AERO-MANCER.
BUT, LET US REMIND YOU OF SOME-THING.
...BECAUSE YOU REQUESTED IT.
WE SENT HIM ONLY...
HE IS TOO NAIVE!
TOO YOUNG!
HOW CAN HE HELP OUR CLAN...
...ATONE FOR OUR DISGRACE?!

DON'T WORRY.
HE MAY BE YOUNG...
...BUT I HAVE FAITH IN HIM.
OH, BIG BROTHER.
SO, DON'T SWEAT IT!
BECAUSE HE'S COOL.
YOU KNOW WHY?

BE CAREFUL, ROSALITE...
CRACK
CRACK
OH, NO...!
CRIK
CRIK
CRIK
CRACK

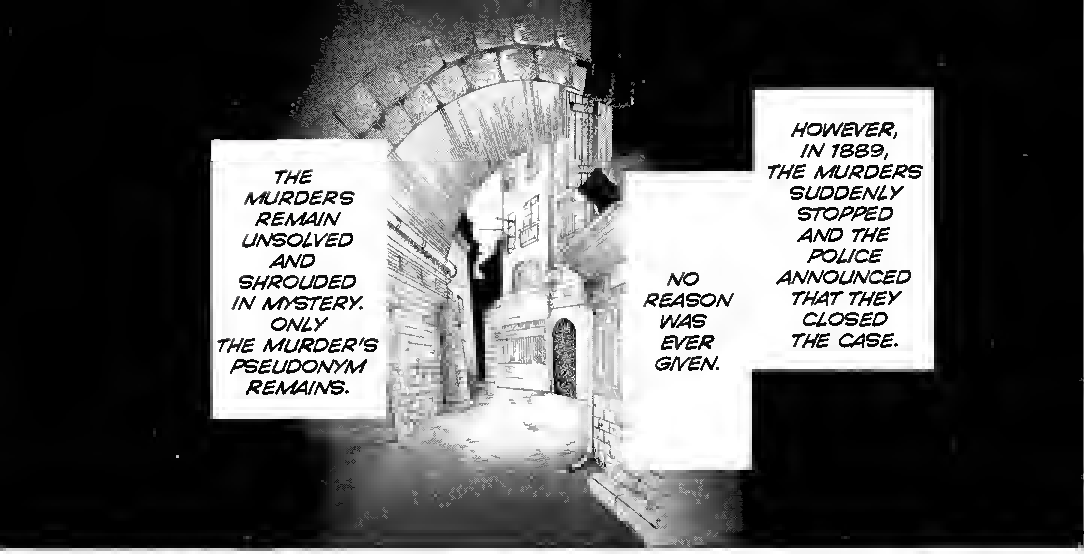
KA-KRAAAAK!
CARNO!
NOT AGAIN, CARNO!
FSSS
FSSS
……

MUMBLE, MUMBLE...
URR..?

WHY DOES HE...
...ALWAYS LOSE CONTROL WHEN HE'S ASLEEP?
TELE-POR-TATION COM-PLETE, CARNO.
LOOK AROUND! WELCOME TO HONG KONG!
CARNO!
WAKE UP, CARNO!
HUH..?
.....
ROSALITE...?
OKAY, LISTEN UP.
YOU'RE IN A COMBAT ZONE...
...CARNO GUINO.

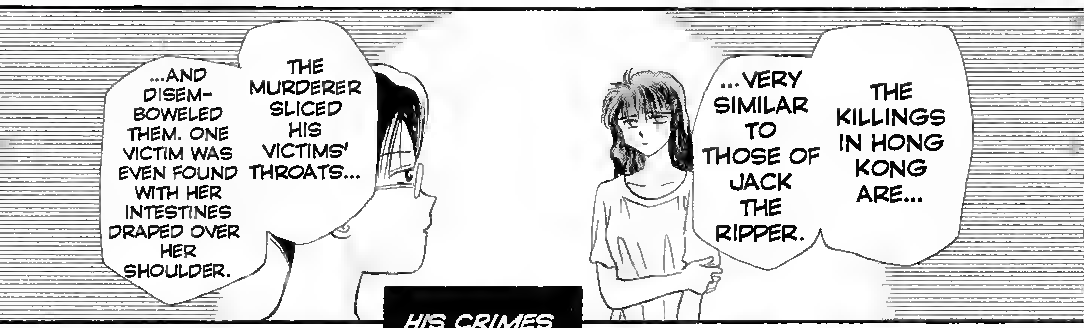
YOU'RE AFTER "JACK THE RIPPER."
DOES THAT SOUND LIKE A PUSHOVER TO YOU?
I HEARD THAT...
...JACK THE RIPPER STRUCK AGAIN.
I WANT YOU TO BE VERY CAREFUL, MONICA.
HE'S TARGETING GIRLS.
JACK THE RIPPER?
WHO IS THAT, MA'AM?

JACK THE RIPPER.
...LET ME READ YOU THE ARTICLE.
WELL...
...HOLD ON...
JACK THE RIPPER FIRST APPEARED IN LONDON SOME 100 YEARS AGO.
HIS FIRST VICTIM WAS A PROSTITUTE. HER BODY WAS FOUND ON AUGUST 8TH, 1888, ON A PUBLIC STREET IN A POOR SECTION OF TOWN.
HER THROAT WAS CUT AND HER STOMACH SLICED OPEN.
IT SIGNALED THE BEGINNING OF A SERIES OF SIMILAR MURDERS. ALL OCCURRED IN JUST A 450 SQUARE METER PATCH OF THE CITY CLOSE TO THE THAMES RIVER.
NO MATTER HOW CLOSELY THE POLICE AND LOCALS WATCHED THE AREA...
...THE MURDERER KEPT SLIPPING THROUGH THEIR FINGERS.
THE TALE OF THE FACELESS KILLER AND THE ATTEMPTS TO FIND HIM HORRIFIED AND FASCINATED THE PEOPLE OF LONDON.


THE MURDERS REMAIN UNSOLVED AND SHROUDED IN MYSTERY. ONLY THE MURDER'S PSEUDONYM REMAINS.
NO REASON WAS EVER GIVEN.
HOWEVER, IN 1889, THE MURDERS SUDDENLY STOPPED AND THE POLICE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY CLOSED THE CASE.

THE CASE WAS ALWAYS ABOUT SOMETHING MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF HIS VICTIMS.

THE DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION THE CASE RECEIVED IS A TESTAMENT TO THE MURDERER'S INFAMOUS REPUTATION


...AND DISEMBOWELED THEM. ONE VICTIM WAS EVEN FOUND WITH HER INTESTINES DRAPED OVER HER SHOULDER.
THE MURDERER SLICED HIS VICTIMS' THROATS...
...VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE OF JACK THE RIPPER.
THE KILLINGS IN HONG KONG ARE...

HIS CRIMES WERE A FEAR OF THE DARKNESS MADE PALPABLE.

A POTENT COCKTAIL OF MYSTERY...
I MEAN, NOBODY LIKES BEING STABBED...
...AND HORROR.
WOW.
SO, EVEN THE CLOUDS ARE SHINY IN THIS CITY.
YES. THEY REFLECT THE LIGHT FROM THE BUILDINGS.

SO, THAT SICK BASTARD'S HIDING...
...SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, RIGHT?
CAREFUL, ROSALITE.
IF YOU GET ME INVOLVED, I MIGHT JUST KILL HIM.
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT "KILLING" ANYONE.
IT WON'T BE AS EASY AS YOU SEEM TO THINK.
HUH? ISN'T THAT WHY YOU CALLED ME HERE?
WHAT?
SNICKER SNICKER
YOU THINK I WANT YOU TO MURDER SOMEONE?

NO, SILLY.
I SUMMONED YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE SUCH A HOPELESS MAGICIAN.
THAT'S WHY.
YOU NEED MORE TRAINING, KIDDO!
HUH?
I'M NOT THAT BAD!
.....
SWEETHEART?
YOU'RE POSITIVELY TERRIBLE.
NO. YOU'RE WORSE. YOU'RE THE KING OF CRAPPY MAGICIANS.
HAVE MERCY ON THE POOR THING!

THE KING OF...
...CRAPPY MAGICIANS?
WHATEVER.
SAYS WHO?
THE KING OF CRAPPY MAGICIANS
BUT, YOU KEEP TRYING, HONEY!
THE KING OF HEPPOKO
I'LL PULL OFF HIS ARMS AND LEGS...
...FINE.
I'LL SHOW THAT SICK BASTARD WHO'S REALLY SICK!
...THEN I'LL RIP HIS TORSO INTO EIGHT SLICES LIKE AN OCTOPUS.

I AM CARNO!
MAKING PEOPLE PAY IS MY SPECIALTY.
EIGHT PIECES, JUST LIKE AN OCTO-PUS!
TAISO SAN
くすっ
HEH HEH HEH
IF HE'S REALLY A MAGICIAN, HE MAY ACTUALLY SURVIVE.
IF SO, I'LL HIT HIM EVEN HARDER
BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD! BRING IT ON.
SIGH
FLIP
THERE'S A LOT OF MYSTERY SURROUNDING THIS CASE.
WOOSH!

THE POLICE HAVE DISCLOSED FIVE VICTIMS.
BUT...
...OUR JACK'S KILLED SIX GIRLS ALTOGETHER.
THE BIG QUESTION IS...
...HOW HE'S SELECTING HIS VICTIMS.
ON THE SURFACE, ALL BUT THE LAST SEEM TO HAVE BEEN PICKED RANDOMLY.
BUT, HE'LL NEVER BE SATISFIED...
...NO MATTER...
...HOW MANY GIRLS HE KILLS.
ANYWAY...
...I DON'T THINK IT'S RANDOM. YOU CAN BET ON THAT.
ANYWAY.

LOOK! IT'S A FISH!
FWISH
SPLASH!
A SCOUT?
WOW, COOL!
LOOKS LIKE OL' JACK WANTS TO CHECK YOU OUT!

WELL?
DID YOU SEE IT?
ACTUALLY...
...THAT WAS A TYPE OF ECTOPLASM.
HIS ALTER EGO. A PART OF HIS SOUL.
DID YOU SEE IT?
.....
OKAY, WHAT DID IT LOOK LIKE?
A FISH...

AND WHAT KIND OF FISH...?
.....
UH...
.....
...A WHALE?
WHALES AREN'T FISH!
WHACK!
ばこん
YOU COULDN'T SEE IT, COULD YOU?
SMAK SMAK SMAK!
YOU'RE HOPELESS!
HOPELESS, HOPELESS, HOPELESS!
.....
SPLASH

YOU'RE BACK, I SEE.
SLOSH
SPLISH

GLUG
GLUG
GULP
SPLASH
GLUG
HA HA HA! NOW IT ALL BECOMES CLEAR.
HERE I EXPECTED THE GUINO CLAN TO SEND SOMEONE!
...I HARDLY EXPECTED THE GUINO CLAN TO SEND ONE OF THEIR OWN INSTEAD!

SO, THEY MANAGED TO INTERRUPT THEIR BELOVED DIVINATIONS...
...TO RAISE A YOUNG WARRIOR.
HA HA HA.
WHAT A SHAME.
HE COULD HAVE GROWN INTO QUITE A HANDSOME MAN.
WHAT DO YOU SEEK...
...MY BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAGICIAN?
WHY DO YOU JOURNEY INTO THE ABYSS OF THE DARK ARTS?

SPLASH
ONE BURGER...
...ONE FISH SAND-WICH...
...AND ONE ORANGE JUICE.
THANK YOU!
DID YOU SEE THAT GUY?
WASN'T HE DRESSED KINDA WEIRD?
I DUNNO. HARD TO TELL.
FLAP

"AEROMANCER."
I HEARD THAT!
AH, WHO CARES. HE WAS CUTE!
GRIN!
RUSTLE
IT MEANS READING THE SKY.
THE NAME COMES FROM THE GREEK WORDS FOR "AIR" AND "PROPHECY."
...WE HARNESS THE POWER OF THE WINDS FOR OUR PROPHECIES...
...THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN AEROMANCER.
WE WATCH THE CLOUDS AND THE BREEZES...
...WE FIND THE SPIRITS HIDDEN WITHIN THEM...

THAT'S WHY THEY SAY, ANYWAY.
BUT, HONESTLY, I DON'T HAVE A CLUE AS TO WHAT ANY OF IT MEANS.
THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ELEMENTALS AND SPIRITS.
ELEMENTALS DON'T HAVE ANY "SELF."
NOW, USE YOUR IMAGINATION.
WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE CLOUDS?
UH...A PAIR OF PANTIES?
I'M NOT AGAINST PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE!
AIIEE!
YOU SAID TO USE MY IMAGINATION!
.....
GOT SMACKED FOR THAT...!
.....
YOU'RE POISONING YOURSELF!
CARNO! WHERE WERE YOU? AND WHAT ARE YOU EATING?

GULP!
MUNCH
HUH?

HUH?

WHO IS HE?
WHAT IS HE?
SO... MYS-TERIOUS.
WAIT...
...IS HE LOOKING AT ME?
WHY, HELLO THERE!

ROSALITE AUGURED THE WINDS THIS DAWN.
THEY SAID I'D FIND WHO I WAS LOOKING FOR.
EXCUSE ME?
I'M SORRY...
I--
YOU.
NO QUESTION ABOUT IT.
YOU'RE NEXT.
LOOK AT THAT BODY.
YOU'RE WAY TOO PURE FOR...
...A CITY LIKE THIS.

RUSTLE
MAKE NO MISTAKE.
SQUISH
YOU'RE JACK THE RIPPER'S NEXT VICTIM.

POOR THING.
DIS-EMBOWEL-MENT.
IT ISN'T PLEASANT. HAVING YOUR GUTS PULLED OUT SLOWLY.

MUNCH
AAAA

MAKE NO MISTAKE.
HE JUST COMES OUT OF NOWHERE...
...AND DISAPPEARS.
YOU'RE JACK THE RIPPER'S NEXT VICTIM.
.....
WHY DID YOU DO THAT?
POOR THING
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY.
HEY, NOW AT LEAST SHE WON'T GO OUT ALONE.
NOW SHE'S REALLY FREAKING OUT.
SLURP SLURP
IT'S THE GREATEST.
SOME OF HONG KONG'S BEST AMERICAN FOOD.
WHAT ARE YOU EATING, ANYWAY?

ANYWAY, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HER. I THINK EVEN YOU CAN TELL.
OUCH! WATCH IT, SIS.
HUMAN BEINGS NATURALLY ACCUMULATE IMPURITIES AS THEY GO THROUGH THEIR LIVES.
EVEN AIR AND FOOD CONTAIN IMPURITIES.
BUT, YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?
THAT'S WHY A MAGICIAN HAS TO BE SELECTIVE ABOUT WHAT THEY EAT!
ANYWAY, THAT GIRL...
SHE'S WAY PURER THAN YOU ARE, CARNO!
WHACK!
DO YOU REALIZE HOW RARE IT IS TO FIND AN ADULT AS PURE AS THAT? SHE'S LIKE A CHILD!
...OUCH! ALL RIGHT, ALREADY! I'LL PROTECT HER...
...FROM THAT SICK BASTARD.

SO. YOU SUMMONED ME TO PROTECT THAT WOMAN.
AM I RIGHT, ROSALITE?
YOU? YOU'VE BEEN A NOVICE FOR 12 YEARS.
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TALKED TO A SPIRIT BEFORE.
MAYBE. BUT, I CAN STILL HELP.
SO, YOU'LL DO IT?
I'LL DO IT.

REALLY? YOU MEAN IT?
.....
I DO.
YEAH.
THERE'S MORE THAN A LITTLE MAGIC IN THE WORLD, EVEN TODAY.
ALTHOUGH IT'S CHANGED QUITE A BIT OVER THE YEARS.
MAGICIANS ALWAYS MAKE SURE TO PASS DOWN THEIR SPELLS TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS.

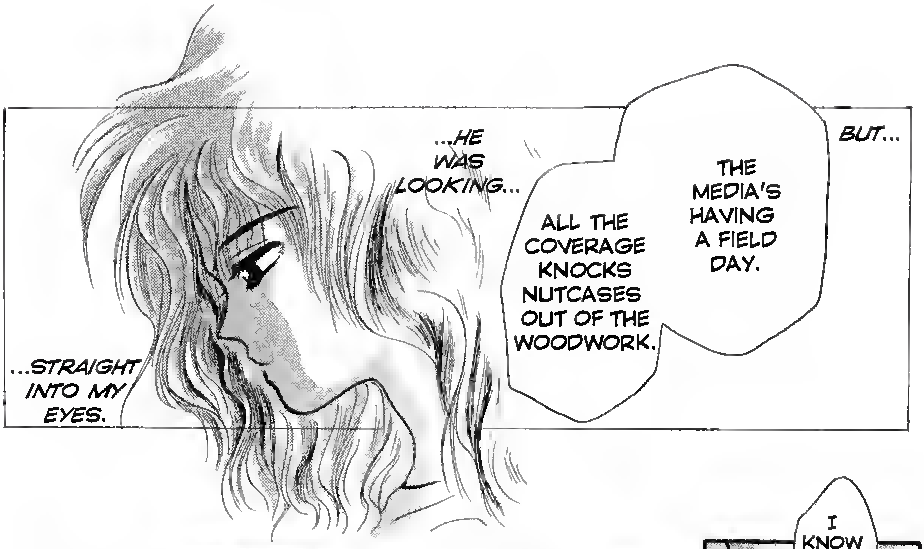
MAGICIANS ARE INTIMATE WITH THE NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL. THEY'VE DISCOVERED THE TRUTH OF THE UNIVERSE WITHOUT EVER CRACKING A SCIENCE BOOK.
SATOR AREPO TENET OPERA ROTAS
MAGICIANS CAN CONVERSE WITH SPIRITS AND DEMONS, AND EVEN FORGE PACTS WITH THEM.
MAGIC IS INHERITED.
IT'S PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE GENERATIONS.
THAT'S HOW WE, THE GUINO CLAN, HAVE SURVIVED THROUGH THE AGES.
ONE DAY.
...A LITTLE BOY NAMED CARNO CAME TO US.
WE HADN'T TAKEN A NEW BROTHER FOR MORE THAN A DECADE.
CARNO DIDN'T HAVE ANY MEMORY OF HIS FIRST FIVE YEARS OF LIFE.
BUT, HE WAS MISCHEVIOUS AND ENERGETIC.

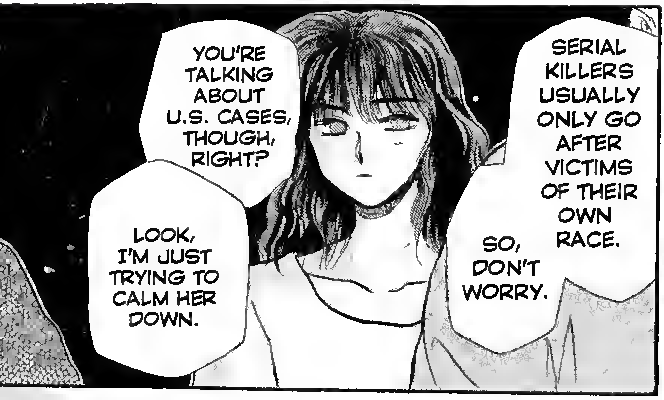
...MAYBE HE WAS EVEN A LITTLE CRAZY.
IN FACT...
...HE NEVER FAILED TO ACCOMPLISH HIS GOAL.
BUT, ONCE HE MADE UP HIS MIND...
I WIN!
AM I COOL OR WHAT?
HEY!
I KNOW HE WILL.
EVEN IF HE GOES A LITTLE WILD.
CARNO SAID HE WOULD DO IT.

I'M CARNO GUINO.
I'LL DO IT BECAUSE I SAID I'D DO IT.
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'LL PROTECT THE WOMAN...
...FOR MY SISTER'S SAKE.

BUT, WHAT I'M REALLY AFTER...
...IS TURNING THAT GUY INTO A HUMAN OCTOPUS!
SO, YOU DIDN'T FIND HIM IN THE MUG SHOTS, THEN?

THE MAN ISN'T IN THERE.
ARE YOU SURE?
THAT'S RIGHT.
...SEEMS LIKE JUST A YOUNG PUNK.
SOME OF THE THINGS HE SAID SEEM TO HAVE A CONNECTION TO OUR CASE.
AND RIGHT NOW WE NEED EVERY LEAD WE CAN GET.
BUT, YOUR CASE...
I GUESS CARNO'S THE DARK AND DANGEROUS TYPE.


...STRAIGHT INTO MY EYES.
...HE WAS LOOKING...
ALL THE COVERAGE KNOCKS NUTCASES OUT OF THE WOODWORK.
THE MEDIA'S HAVING A FIELD DAY.
BUT...

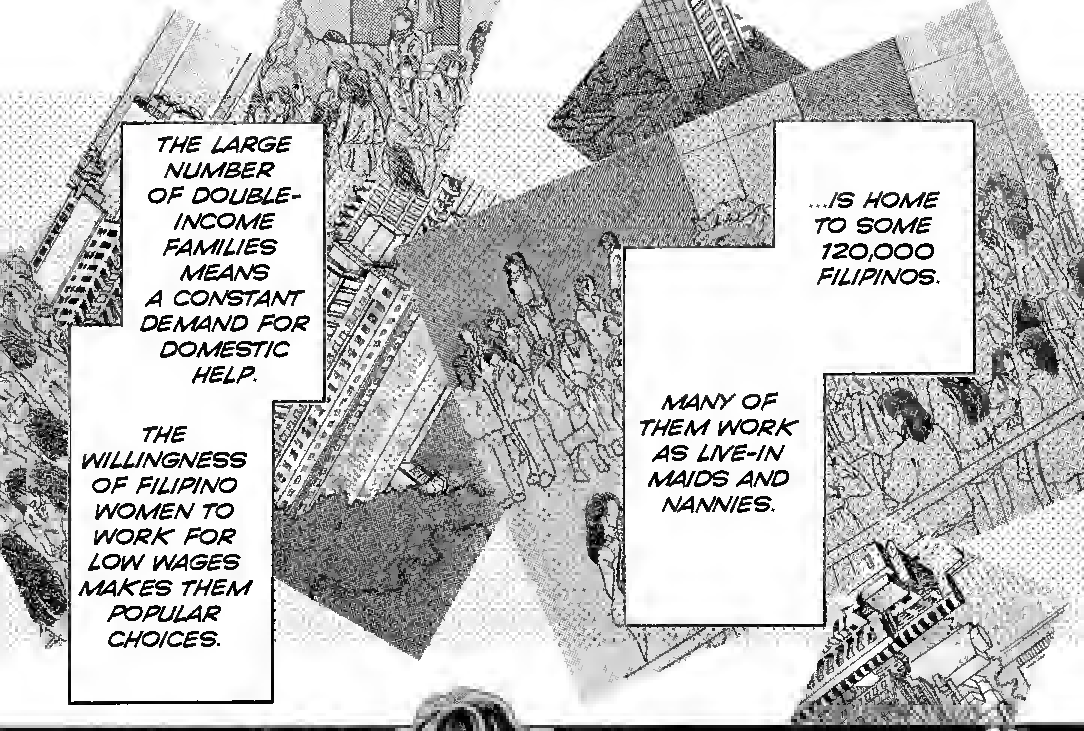

YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT U.S. CASES, THOUGH, RIGHT?
LOOK, I'M JUST TRYING TO CALM HER DOWN.
SERIAL KILLERS USUALLY ONLY GO AFTER VICTIMS OF THEIR OWN RACE.
SO, DON'T WORRY.

WAS HE REALLY JUST TEASING ME?
MONICA!

I KNOW THE T.V. SHOWS ARE GOING CRAZY WITH "JACK THE RIPPER" RIGHT NOW.
STEP
STEP
...BUT THE KILLER'S TASTE IN WOMEN IS USUALLY PRETTY CLEAR-CUT IN THESE CASES.
THIS ONE'S GOT A THING FOR HONG KONG GIRLS.
STEP

THE POLICE?
WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?
ARE YOU IN TROUBLE?
MY HUSBAND AND I ARE BUSY PEOPLE. WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
I'M SORRY, MA'AM, BUT MAY WE SEE YOUR PAPER-WORK?
REPORTS OF MIS-TREATMENT OF FILIPINO HELP ARE ON THE RISE, AND...
JUST WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
I'M SORRY.
I'LL START DINNER.
PLEASE DO.
THE KIDS ARE HUN-GRY.
WELL, I NEVER...
THERE'S A LOT OF BAD APPLES OUT THERE. YOU'D BETTER STAY IN FROM NOW ON, MONICA.
YES, MA'AM.

PRESENT-DAY HONG KONG...
...UM...
...ER...
...CHINESE IS HARD...
UM...
THE FIRST... VIC--VICTIM IS...
...UM... C-CENTRAL...
...AND WAS F-FOUND...
WHAT'S THE PAPER SAY...
...UM...


THE LARGE NUMBER OF DOUBLE-INCOME FAMILIES MEANS A CONSTANT DEMAND FOR DOMESTIC HELP.
...IS HOME TO SOME 120,000 FILIPINOS.
THE WILLINGNESS OF FILIPINO WOMEN TO WORK FOR LOW WAGES MAKES THEM POPULAR CHOICES.
MANY OF THEM WORK AS LIVE-IN MAIDS AND NANNIES.

I GIVE UP.
ARGH!
NO WAY I CAN READ A NEWS-PAPER YET...
HM. GUESS I'D BETTER ASK LITA DOWNSTAIRS THIS WEEKEND. SHE'S SMART. SHE'S EVEN A COLLEGE GRADUATE
HIGHLY EDUCATED MAIDS AREN'T UNCOMMON IN HONG KONG

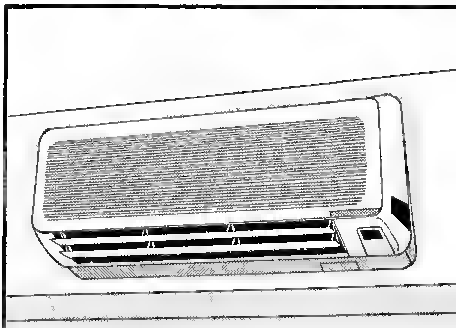
AND THIS FAMILY...
I CAN MAKE MORE MONEY HERE THAN AT HOME.
...PAYS WELL.

WHAT A DAY.
BUT, YOU KNOW, I STILL LIKE IT HERE.

I'VE GOT TO KEEP WORKING AS HARD AS I CAN.
SOMEDAY I'LL BE ABLE TO GO BACK HOME WITH A TON OF MONEY.
HUFF
UH...
...YES.
HUFF
HI.
HEARD YOU HAD SOME TROUBLE TODAY.
CAN YOU TURN UP THE AIR CONDITIONING?
SURE!
WHEW! IT'S STILL HOT IN HERE!
WE HAD TO TURN IT DOWN...
...THE JAPANESE CLIENTS WERE COMPLAINING THAT IT FELT LIKE A FREEZER!
BUT, THE HEAT OUTSIDE REALLY MAKES ME WANT TO BLAST IT!
RRRRRRRRRR
YES, SIR.

HM.
WELL, WELL.
SO, THE YOUNG ONE HAS ALREADY MADE CONTACT WITH ONE OF MY "DIVINATION TOOLS."
AND THIS PARTICULAR "DIVINATION TOOL" HAS BEEN PURIFIED TO A HIGHER DEGREE THAN ANY PREVIOUS.

THIS NEW ONE IS REALLY STRONG, ISN'T IT?
SURE IS.



RRRRRRRRRR

WHAT TO DO...
...WHAT TO DO?
THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER POTENTIAL "TOOLS" OUT THERE.

SHERLOCK!
BUT, THEN AGAIN, I WONDER HOW HE WILL REACT TO MY SKINNING HER ALIVE?
I'M CURIOUS TO SEE WHAT THIS MAGICIAN OF GUINO HAS GOT...
YOU'RE MY LAST SERVANT.
THE THOUGHT OF LOSING YOU PAINS ME.
FLEE IF YOU FEEL YOUR LIFE IS IN DANGER.
I PROMISE I WON'T PUNISH YOU.

I WOULD NEVER DREAM OF CORRECTING YOU, MY MASTER...
...BUT YOU'VE NEVER PUNISHED ME EVEN ONCE.
AND I AM FULLY AWARE OF THE LIMITS OF MY POWERS.
I HAVE NO IDEA HOW SKILLFUL THE GUINO MAGICIAN IS.
IN THE EVENT IT HAPPENS, I HUMBLY BEG IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR PROTECTION.
AS YOU COMMAND, I SWEAR TO RUN IF I FEEL I AM IN DANGER.

SPLISH
AH...!
GULLISH!
NOW...
...YOUR EYE IS MY EYE.
IT IS AN HONOR...
...MY MASTER.

HOW CAN YOU SLEEP LIKE THAT?
YOU'RE WEARING SO MANY LAYERS!
NNN...

...?!
...?
KLIK
I...
...THOUGHT I HEARD A VOICE...
GASP
...JUST THE WIND!

THE DOOR'S WIDE OPEN!
WHO DID THAT?
W-
WHAT?!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
...OR SOME-BODY...
...WILL GET IN...
I'VE GOT TO CLOSE IT...

SHUFFLE
HUH?
THEN AGAIN.
GASP
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MONICA?
CAN YOU CLOSE THE DOOR?
MONICA!
IF SOMEBODY BROKE IN...
...IS SHUTTING THE DOOR THE BEST IDEA?

IT'S SO HOT IN HERE
YOU'VE GOT TO TURN UP THE AIR CONDITIONING!
TCH
SPLAT
...THIS CITY IS SO HOT!
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
I SWEAR...
WHO NEEDS SKIN WHEN THEY SLEEP...?
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE SOME OFF?
YOU'RE WEARING TOO MANY LAYERS.

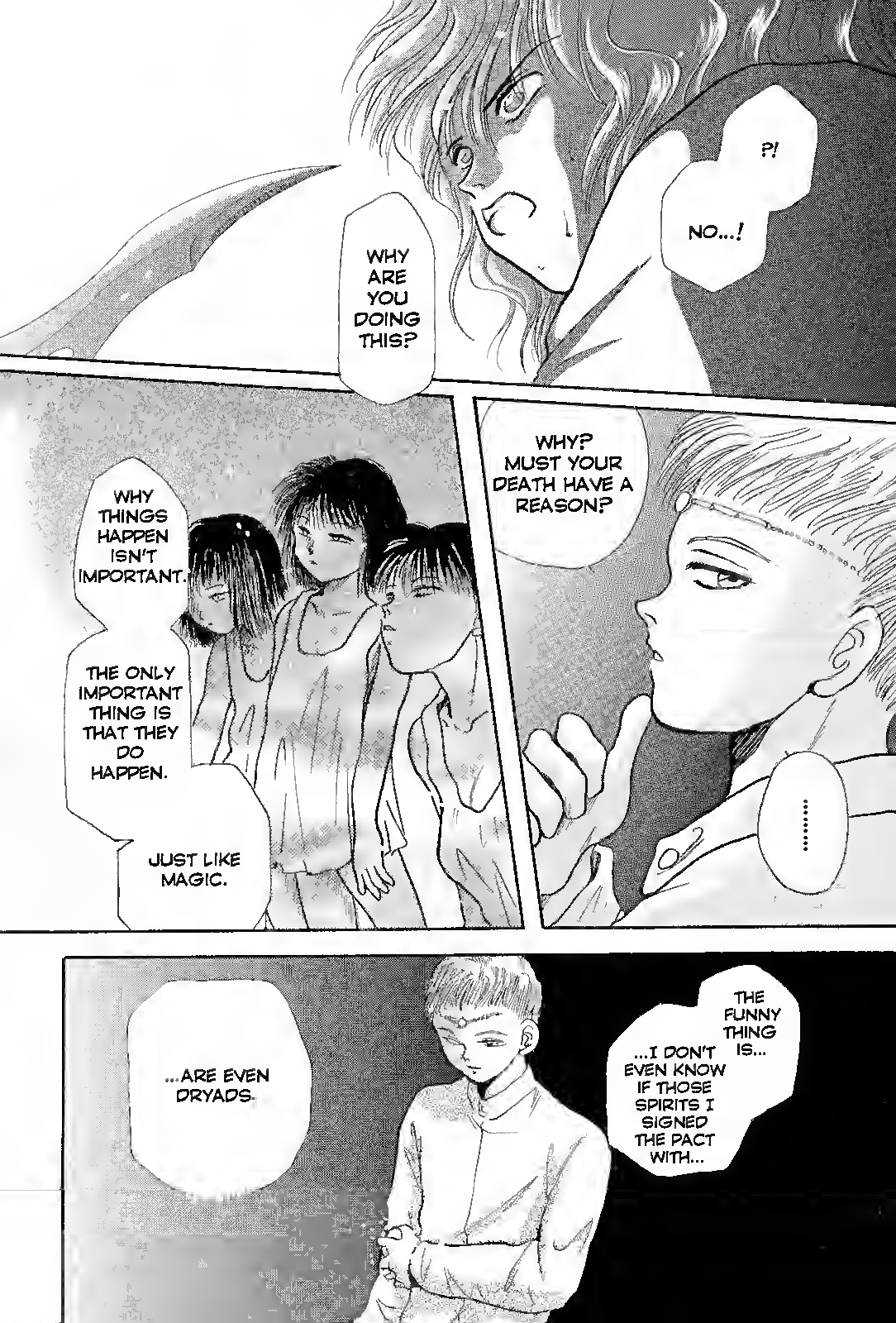
CAN WE HELP?
GASP!
CLACK!
SLAM!

...?!
WAIT...!
I JUST OPENED THE DOOR!
WHAT'S... WHAT'S... WRONG WITH ME?
HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE?
GASP!
IT WAS ALREADY OPEN!
THANKS FOR OPENING THE DOOR.
STAY JUST LIKE THAT, PLEASE.

TURN AROUND AND GO BACK INSIDE.

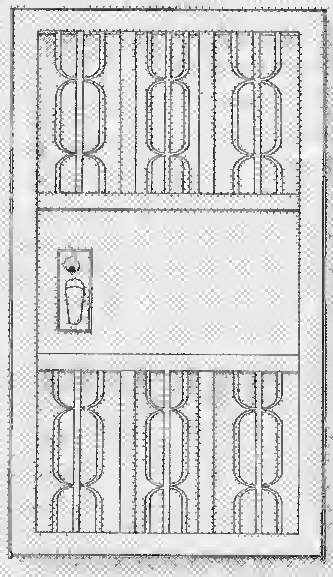
THIS ALL MUST SEEM QUITE STRANGE TO YOU.
SHIVER
THEY'LL STAY ASLEEP...
...JUST LIKE THAT.
AFTER THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF CONTACTS WITH THE WORLD BEYOND, I EVENTUALLY MANAGED TO MAKE A PACT WITH A GROUP OF SPIRITS CALLED DRYADS.
DRYADS ARE AN INTER-ESTING LOT. THEY CAN PUT PEOPLE TO SLEEP, MAKE THEM DREAM.
AND I CAN AMPLIFY THEIR POWERS WITH THIS SPHERE.
AND LOOK!
HUFF HUFF
MAGIC ISN'T AL-MIGHTY.
.....

BUT, DRYADS AREN'T ALL-POWERFUL AND NEITHER AM I.
OUR COMBINED EFFECT DIFFERS BY PLACE, TIME, AND THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF OUR TARGET.
I CAN USE IT TO CONTROL PEOPLE WHILE THEY SLEEP.
LOOK!
DRYADS ARE TIMID.
THEY HESITATE AT THE MERE SIGHT OF A CLOSED DOOR OR WINDOW.
DRYADS CAN'T EASILY FORCE SOMEONE TO DO SOMETHING THAT CONFLICTS WITH THE PERSON'S NATURE
TAKE MURDER, FOR EXAMPLE. THAT HAS TO BE PLANTED DEEP INSIDE.
THEIR REAL SPECIALTY IS DIGGING UP SECRETS BURIED DEEP IN THE HUMAN PSYCHE...
...THEN WEAVING THEM INTO DREAMS AND ILLUSIONS.


?!
NO...!
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
WHY? MUST YOUR DEATH HAVE A REASON?
.....
WHY THINGS HAPPEN ISN'T IMPORTANT.
THE ONLY IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THEY DO HAPPEN.
JUST LIKE MAGIC.
THE FUNNY THING IS...
...I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF THOSE SPIRITS I SIGNED THE PACT WITH...
...ARE EVEN DRYADS.

I LOVE THIS.
HAVING A YOUNG LADY FOR AN AUDIENCE.
POOR THING...
NOOO!
IT WAS SO EASY TO SHOW YOU AN ILLUSION...
...EVEN FROM OUTSIDE.
YOU...
...MUST BE SCARED.
YOU'RE A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND. YOU MUST BE LONELY.
YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A PRINCESS CONFINED IN A CURSED CASTLE.
THAT'S WHY THESE PEOPLE LOOKED LIKE MONSTERS TO YOU.
YOU JUST WANT OUT.
THAT'S WHY THAT DOOR WAS WIDE OPEN IN YOUR DREAM.

BEEP, BEEP!



BEEP, BEEP!
BEEP, BEEP
BEEP
GASP!
CRUNCH
CREAK
CREAK
COME...
...MAGICIAN OF GUINO!

BAM!
RATTLE!
BAM!
CRACK!
A POL-TER-GEIST?
WOMMMMMM

?!
SCRAAAAAAAPE
FLING!
WHAT THE...?!
...THE CARPET!
IT'S MOVING!

BAM!
FWOOOSH
NNNGH!
WHAT KIND OF MAGIC WAS THAT?!
WHAT THE?!
PRETTY CRUDE, WHATEVER IT WAS...
何だか
何て非道な…

SEE? SHE'S STANDING BY THE WINDOW NOW.
I'M THE MAN!
YOU ARE SUCH AN IDIOT, CARNO!
TONIGHT I FEEL LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD'S FULL OF NAUGHTY KIDS.
BUT, I'LL LET IT SLIP THIS TIME. I KNOW HOW ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES YOU ARE.
WHO'S THE MAN?

HE'S BEEN TOYING WITH HER LONG ENOUGH.
YOU PROMISED ME SOMETHING, DIDN'T YOU, CARNO?
STEEE

IT'S KILLING TIME!

SLINGSHOT

AN ANCIENT BUT DEADLY WEAPON. USED WITH EXCELLENCE BY U.S. SPECIAL FORCES DURING WORLD WAR II. CAPABLE OF USING ALMOST ANYTHING AS AMMUNITION, A SLINGSHOT IS THE ULTIMATE TOOL FOR GUERRILLA WARFARE. SLINGSHOTS ARE ALSO USED FOR TARGET PRACTICE, SO YOU DON'T NEED A SPECIAL PERMIT TO OWN ONE. NEVER AIM A SLINGSHOT AT PEOPLE OR ANIMALS!

CRAKK!
FLASH!

H-HEY!
THAT WASN'T A GRENADE, WAS IT?
JUMP
C'MON, I NEED TO GET UP THERE! WHIP UP SOME WIND!
JUST REMEMBER: YOU DON'T TOUCH ANYONE BUT HIM. GOT IT?
I KNOW, I KNOW.
WOOOOOOSH

SWAY
UHHH...!
A FLASH BOMB?!
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE USED A WEAPON...
...LIKE THAT ON ME.
WHAT DOES HE THINK I AM? A TERRORIST?
I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE.
IT'S OKAY TO TORTURE HIM, RIGHT?

WHAT KIND OF MONSTER THROWS A BOMB INTO SOMEONE'S HOUSE...? I'D BETTER KEEP AWAY FROM A MANIAC LIKE THAT.
BESIDES, I HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT...
...WHAT KIND OF MAGIC HE'S USING...
THE DOOR'S COMPLETELY BATTERED IN.
...HE SEEMS PRETTY STRONG.
I DON'T GET IT.
WHY DOESN'T HE USE MAGIC DIRECTLY ON ME?
CREAK
CREAK

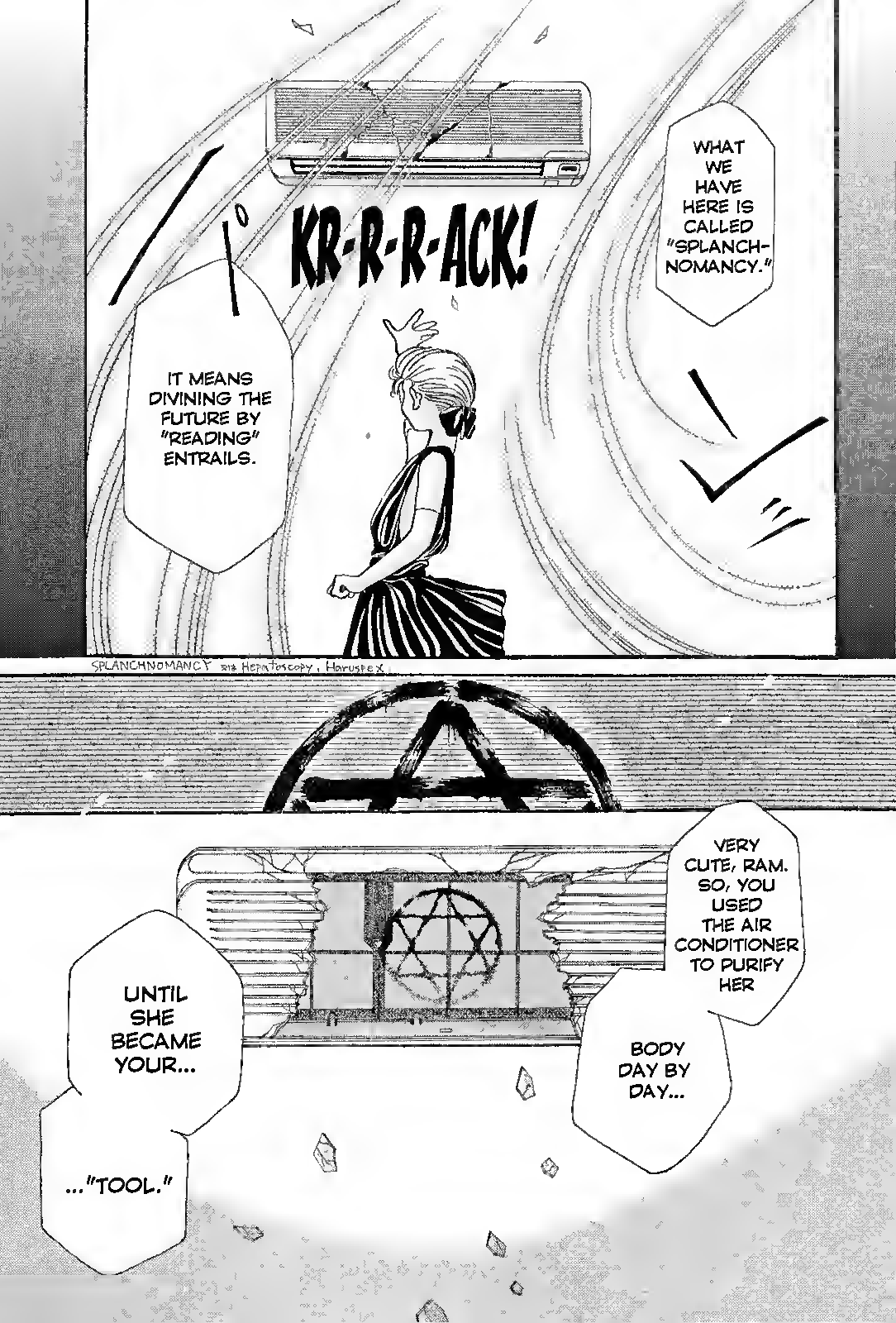
WHERE IS THAT SICK BASTARD?
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'RE REFERRING TO.
.....
WHO?
OR MAYBE YOU KNOW HIM AS HONG KONG'S JACK THE RIPPER?
ERNEST RAM GUINO.
HOWEVER YOU SLICE IT, HE'S A TRAITOR.

I WAS RAISED IN THIS CITY.
I'M PART OF THIS CITY!
CLENCH
HEH HEH HEH
I WAS BORN IN THIS CITY.
.....
YOU GUINOS JUST DON'T GET IT!
THIS CITY IS CHANGING TOO QUICKLY!
WE DO WHAT WE DO FOR THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG!
SO, WHAT'S WRONG WITH GUTTING A FEW WOMEN?

DID I EVER TELL YOU?
I HATE FORTUNE-TELLERS.
HOW DARE YOU...!
DRIP DRIP DRIP
HUH?
URK...!
どばっ
SPURRT!
!!
AAAAAHH!
YOU DON'T SOUND LIKE A MAGICIAN AT ALL!

I HOPE HE'S OKAY.
AAAAAAGH!
WHAT THE HELL?! THAT'S SICK!!
I'M SORRY.
NNNG...
TAK
YOU WERE ABOUT TO BE USED AS A TOOL FOR SCRYING, FOR FORTUNE-TELLING...

YOU MAY NOT KNOW THIS, BUT...
...OVER THE AGES PEOPLE HAVE USED MANY TOOLS TO READ THE FUTURE.
CARDS. STARS. FIRE. WATER. WIND.
SOME ARE PRETTY FRIGHTENING.
WHEN RAM FIRST BEGAN STUDYING ERITREAN MAGIC...
...HE TOOK INTEREST IN A TRADITIONAL FORTUNE-TELLING METHOD USED BY ROMAN ORACLES.
RAM EVEN MANAGED TO DEVISE HIS OWN SYSTEM BASED ON WHAT HE LEARNED.
...THE RECENT MURDERS LOOK VERY SIMILAR TO A SERIES OF MURDERS THAT TOOK PLACE IN LONDON A CENTURY AGO.
UNDER THE SURFACE, HOWEVER, THE TWO CASES ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT.
WSSSSSH!


KR-R-R-ACK!
IT MEANS DIVINING THE FUTURE BY "READING" ENTRAILS.
WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS CALLED "SPLANCH-NOMANCY."
SPLANCHNOMANCY aka Hepatoscopy, Haruspex
VERY CUTE, RAM. SO, YOU USED THE AIR CONDITIONER TO PURIFY HER
BODY DAY BY DAY...
UNTIL SHE BECAME YOUR...
..."TOOL."

HOW DARE YOU STEAL THE HOLY BLOOD OF THE GUINO CLAN...
...FOR SUCH FILTHY ENDS!
PLEASE COME WITH ME...
...YOUNG LADY.
AND WE'LL GIVE YOU FULL PROTECTION, TOO.
THAT'S SOMETHING EVEN THE POLICE CAN'T PROMISE YOU.
GIVE US THREE DAYS. WE'LL PUT AN END TO THIS.
.....

WE BELONG TO A SECRET CLAN.
WE AREN'T PERMITTED TO INTERFERE WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
RAM BROKE THAT RULE. NOW HE WANTS TO USE YOU TO SEE HONG KONG'S FUTURE.
RIGHT NOW, WE'RE THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO CAN PROTECT YOU.
THAT'S RIGHT. JUST ME...

...AND CARNO.
HEY!
WAIT UP, JERK!
DON'T RUN AWAY FROM ME!
HUH?
CRACK!
BAM!
OFFICER! OFFICER!
I HEARD NOISES COMING FROM UPSTAIRS!
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!
I SAW SOMEBODY OVER THERE!

.....?.?
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!
WAAAA!
DAMN!
TOO MANY PEOPLE AROUND!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

SWISH
SOMEONE TELL ME!

STREEEETCH!
SOMETHING SMELLS GOOD...!
STREEEETCH!
SPAK

THUMMM!

.....
YOU!
YOU MUST BE...!
MUST BE...
DAMN IT ALL!
I SCREWED UP AGAIN.
WHY DOESN'T IT WORK ALL THE TIME?
GASP!
TRUSH!
TRUSH!

WHY DIDN'T IT WORK?!
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY, ANYWAY.
HOPELESS, HOPELESS HOPELESS!
...?
IT'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE A SCENT THAT PUTS YOU TO SLEEP.
SORRY. I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT THIS.
WH-
WHO ARE YOU?

.....
SHUFFLE
SHUFFLE
WHERE...
...WHERE AM I?
UM...
...WHY AM I HERE?
THIS STRANGE BOY CAME TO THE HOUSE AND...
YOU MEAN ME?
WHAT HAPPENED TO MY FAMILY?
THAT WASN'T A DREAM, WAS IT?
PLOP!
I DUNNO.

GLARE
NO!
GASP
UH, NO!
I DIDN'T MEAN YOU!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHO ARE YOU?
I REMEMBER SOMETHING.
THERE WAS ALSO A GIRL...
THAT'S MY OLDER SISTER.
SHE'S LOOKED LIKE THAT EVER SINCE I WAS A KID.
EVERY ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO RAISED ME IS WEIRD IN SOME WAY.
REALLY?!
OLDER SISTER?
ACTUALLY, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW OLD SHE REALLY IS.
AND SO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO DISEMBOWEL YOU.
IN OUR WORLD, ABILITY MEANS EVERYTHING.
NOBODY IS "ORDINARY."

THERE ARE LOTS OF CLANS LIKE OURS.
WHEN SOMEONE IS BORN WITH SPECIAL ABILITIES, THEY GET SCOUTED OUT.
BUT, THEY DON'T RECRUIT JUST ANYONE.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE SOME-THING SPECIAL TO MAKE THE CUT.
HOW ABOUT YOU?
I DUNNO.
I HEARD THEY WANTED TO KILL ME INSTEAD OF RECRUIT ME.
.....
YOU MEAN, LIKE THE KID I SAW?
NAH. HE ISN'T ANYTHING SPECIAL. SMALL POTATOES, ACTUALLY.

THEY KEPT ME IN ALL THE TIME WHEN I WAS LITTLE.
I RAN AWAY MORE TIMES THAN I CAN REMEMBER.
EVEN TODAY THEY DON'T WANT ME GOING OUT ON MY OWN.
TO BE HONEST...
...I DON'T KNOW WHAT "NORMAL" EVEN MEANS ANYMORE.
しみじみ
YOU'RE NORMAL, THOUGH, AREN'T YA? EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE PURIFIED.
DON'T HAVE A CLUE.
WELL...
I'M CON-FU-SED.
THIS IS ALL SO CON-FUSING.

YOU...
...AND THAT GIRL...
...WHAT...
...WERE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THEY...
...SWORE TO KILL YOU.
MY SISTER AND I...
...SWORE WE WOULDN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
I KNOW...
...WE MUST ALL LOOK LIKE FREAKS TO YOU.
BUT, OUR GOALS ARE DIFFERENT. THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.

YOU WERE BORN NORMAL.
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
WE'LL BE OUT OF YOUR LIFE SOON ENOUGH.
MY SISTER IS TAKING A NAP RIGHT NOW.
SO, STAY QUIET AND DON'T LEAVE THE ROOM, OKAY?
EAT THAT RABBIT FOOD SHE LOVES AND GO TO SLEEP.
UM...
...CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
.....

CAN I DO THE DISHES AFTER I EAT?
DISHES?!
WHAT, WERE YOU BORN TO BE A MAID?
UM...
.....
UM...
WHY?!
HUH?!
...I NEED TO DO SOMETHING, OR I CAN'T RELAX.

UH...
YEAH.
I GUESS SO.
I DIDN'T FORCE YA!
...MAKE SURE YOU TELL HER YOU VOLUNTEERED.
SHE MIGHT GET ANGRY AT ME.
.....
WHEN MY SISTER WAKES UP...
SHE'S A TOUGH COOKIE, BELIEVE ME.
BY THE WAY...
...CAN YOU COOK?
.....

I SNUCK SOME MEAT IN.
CAN YOU COOK IT?
SURE.
CAN YOU MAKE A LOT?
SURE, NO PROBLEM.
REALLY?
WOW. AM I GLAD I SAVED YOU!
UHH...
THANKS
HUH?
WOW.
HE CALLS HIMSELF A MON-STER...
...HE TALKS TOUGH... BUT HE'S REALLY JUST A KID.

UM...
...I WONDER WHAT HE LIKES?
BETTER COOK SOMETHING NICE. HE STILL SCARES ME...
SHIVER
WRAP WRAP
MEAT, MEAT! I CAN EAT MEAT! HALLELUJAH!
COUGH!

COUGH!
COUGH!
COUGH!
NGH...!
SSSSSSSSSHHH
URK!
GAG.
.....

L-LOOKS LIKE...
ゴゴゴ
SSSSSSSSSHHH
GRIP!
...LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT TWO AND A HALF DAYS.
MAYBE MORE, MAYBE LESS.
YOU'RE ALL I'VE GOT!

NEVER HAD ANYONE TO TALK TO BESIDES YOU.
ALL I'VE GOT...
...YOU'RE ALL I'VE GOT, ROSALITE...
...NEVER LIKED ANYONE ELSE...

AH
...
...
DID I WARN HER?
TO STAY AWAY WHILE I'M ASLEEP?

SPLASH
I HATE SLEEPING.
HOLD ON...
IT NEVER COMFORTS ME.
..I HEAR THE SOUND OF THE OCEAN.
WHERE IS THIS?
(I ALWAYS COME HERE. WHY?)
SPLASH

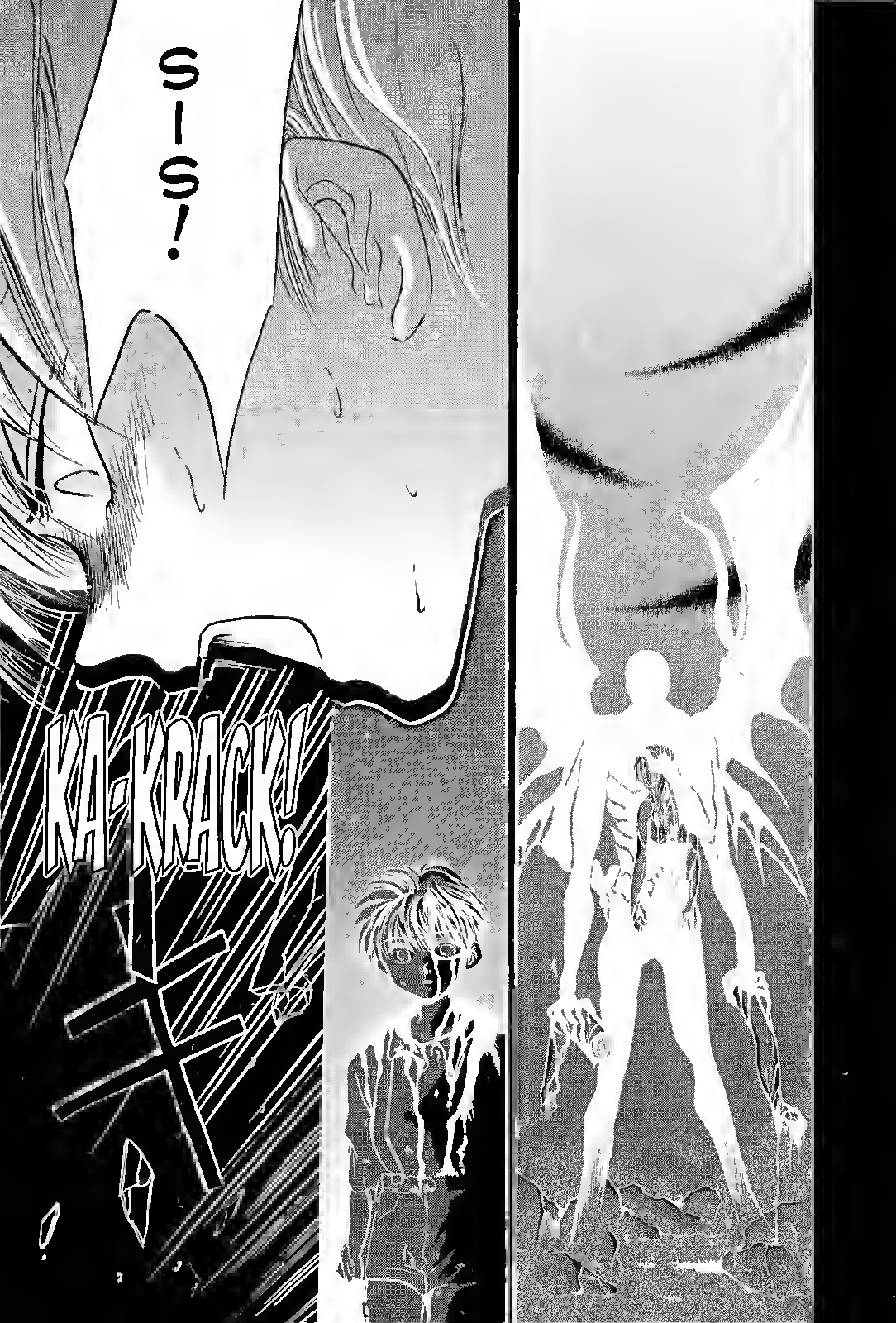
WAAAAAAH!
WHERE IS IT?
WHERE IS THIS?
LIKE ALWAYS...
..I CAN NEVER FIGURE IT OUT.

WAAAAAAH!
AH.
RIGHT ON CUE.
THERE'S THE CRYING KID.
CRYING.
D-DADDY!
M-M-MOMMY!
CALLING FOR THEM...
SIS!
...I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE.
TOO DAMN MANY TIMES.
HE'S CALLING FOR SOMEBODY...

I KNOW THIS DREAM. I KNOW THIS PLACE ALL TOO WELL.
SIS.
STRANGE, YOU KNOW?
HE FIGHTS WITH HIS SISTER ALL THE TIME, BUT...
...HE STARTS LOOKING FOR HER THE MINUTE SHE ISN'T AROUND.

SHE'S ALWAYS SO MEAN TO ME!
SHE ALWAYS HITS ME WHEN I DO SOMETHING WRONG.
SHE NEVER LETS ME RIDE MY BIKE.
...SHE GOT YELLED AT THAT TIME, THOUGH.
WHEN I SPRAYED HER WITH MY WATER PISTOL, SHE PUSHED ME INTO A POOL...
HUH?

IT'S...!
DON'T!
DON'T LISTEN TO THEM!
DON'T!
THAT'S NOT HOW IT WAS AT ALL!
STOP IT!
THEY WEREN'T THERE!


SIS!
KA-KRACK!

URR ...?
BAM!
W-
WHAT THE HELL?

OOPS.
.....
WASN'T PLANNING ON THAT.
MUST HAVE NODDED OFF.
I BROKE THE SOFA.
UH...
...ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH. NOTHING UNUSUAL. BUT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO STAY AWAY WHEN I SLEEP.
ABOUT AN HOUR.
.....
HOW LONG WAS I OUT.

I THINK I KEEP HAVING THE SAME DREAM...
...BUT I ALWAYS FORGET IT WHEN I WAKE UP.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW MY-SELF.
SCRUB SCRUB
I DON'T EVEN KNOW MY REAL NAME.
WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

THERE HE IS! OVER THERE!
THE ONLY THING I REMEMBER IS...
NO. HE'S OUT OF CONTROL.
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME HE EVER GOT VIOLENT, THOUGH.
THUMP THUMP
HE'S THAT KID! FROM THE HOUSE WHERE IT HAPPENED...
ISN'T SOMEONE LOOKING AFTER HIM?!
Ç, MERE!
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD HIM.
HE'S JUST A KID.
THESE DAYS HE ACTS LIKE HE'S POSSESSED!
THUMP THUMP

C'MERE...
RUSTLE
GET OFF ME!
STOP IT!
GRIT!
YOU'RE SCARING HIM.
GASP!
I AM...
DON'T BE ROUGH!

4
K-KRAKLE! KRAK!
GYAAAH!
WHOA!
WAS THAT LIGHTNING?
W-WHAT THE...
.....
AN EXCELLENT SHOT...
...SIR HYMAN.
HE WOULD HAVE KILLED THE LOT OF THEM IF I HADN'T INTERVENED.

WELL, WELL.
HE APPEARS TO BE QUITE UNIQUE.
SIR HYMAN?
HE'S THE HOPE OF THE TEMPLAR KNIGHTS.
HE HAPPENED ACROSS THE BOY DURING HIS CRUSADE.
THE TEMPLAR KNIGHTS DON'T WANT HIM, SO HE'S AVAILABLE FOR WHOEVER CLAIMS HIM.
SOUNDS LIKE A STRAY DOG.
IT'S AMAZING HE'S STILL ALIVE.
I HEARD HE'S EXTREMELY DANGEROUS WHEN PROVOKED.
HE'S AS GOOD AS DEAD IF NOBODY TAKES HIM IN.

WHERE AM I?
WHERE AM I?
CREAK!
WHERE...?

HOW HIGH WAS ITS RANK?
SO, TELL ME...
...ABOUT THE DEMON HE KILLED AND ATE.
THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY YOUR ABILITIES.
YOU HAVE A NEW HOME.
SO, THEY WILL STUDY YOU FIRST.
NOBODY KNOWS IF THEY'LL BE USEFUL OR NOT.
BUT, YOUR ABILITIES ARE ALMOST TOO SPECIAL.
THE GUINO CLAN. IT'S A DISTIN-GUISHED FAMILY.

I'M THE ONE WHO TOLD THEM TO ADOPT YOU...
...AS A FAMILY MEMBER INSTEAD OF A LAB RAT.
YOU SURE DON'T SEEM TO APPRECIATE IT, THOUGH!
THE SOIL AROUND HERE IS EASY TO CARVE.
MANY CENTURIES AGO, PEOPLE HID FROM MUSLIMS HERE.
I REMEMBER IT LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY.
WE'VE ONLY BEEN HERE A HUNDRED YEARS, THOUGH.
THEY TOOK ME TO SOME KIND OF CAVE...
WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME.
...AND THEY TOLD ME IT WAS MY NEW HOME.

AND UNDER THE DIM LIGHTS, PEOPLE SAT QUIETLY AND CHANTED SPELLS.
MOST OF MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES BEGIN THERE.
IT WAS A STRANGE PLACE, FILLED WITH UNFAMILIAR ODORS.
WHERE'S THE POOL?
WHAT?
I DON'T KNOW THIS PLACE.
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME...
...HE'S EVER SPOKEN.
WHAT DID HE SAY?
PSY-CHO-KINESIS.
THAT'S THE ONLY ABILITY WE'VE CONFIRMED SO FAR.
THAT, A SHORT FUSE, AND VIOLENT TENDEN-CIES.

HUH?!
I EXPECTED MORE THAN THAT.
HE SIMPLY ISN'T MANIFESTING ANYTHING ELSE YET.
HIS OTHER SKILLS APPEAR TO BE BURIED IN HIS SUBCONSCIOUS. A PSYCHO-SOMATIC BLOCKAGE.
THE PSYCHO-KINESIS MAY BE A LEAK OF SORTS. A RESULT OF HIS REPRESSING HIS OTHER ABILITIES.
WHAT-EVER THE CASE, WE'LL NEED MORE TIME TO STUDY HARD.
I SEE.
I HOPE THE...
...TEMPLAR KNIGHTS WERE RIGHT.
I'M VERY CURIOUS ABOUT HIM.
THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING.
THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT ME.
THIS PLACE ISN'T MY HOME.
THEY'RE TALKING A LOT.
EVERYTHING HERE FEELS WRONG.

I WANNA GO HOME.
...?
DO I EVEN HAVE ONE?
COME.
YOU MUST BE COLD.
LET'S GET YOU SOMETHING WARM TO DRINK.
MISS ROSALITE.
PLEASE BE CAREFUL WITH HIM.
I'M FINE.
I'M FULLY AWARE OF WHAT'S GOING ON!
WOW!
WHAT LONG EYELASHES! I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO BE SO CUTE!

!!
MISS ROSA-LITE...!!
SMACK!
HOW DARE YOU SLAP A LADY'S FACE!
HMMM.
ROSALITE!
STOP IT!
SMACK
DON'T PUSH HIM!
CARNO!
GRIT
OH, DON'T BE SILLY.

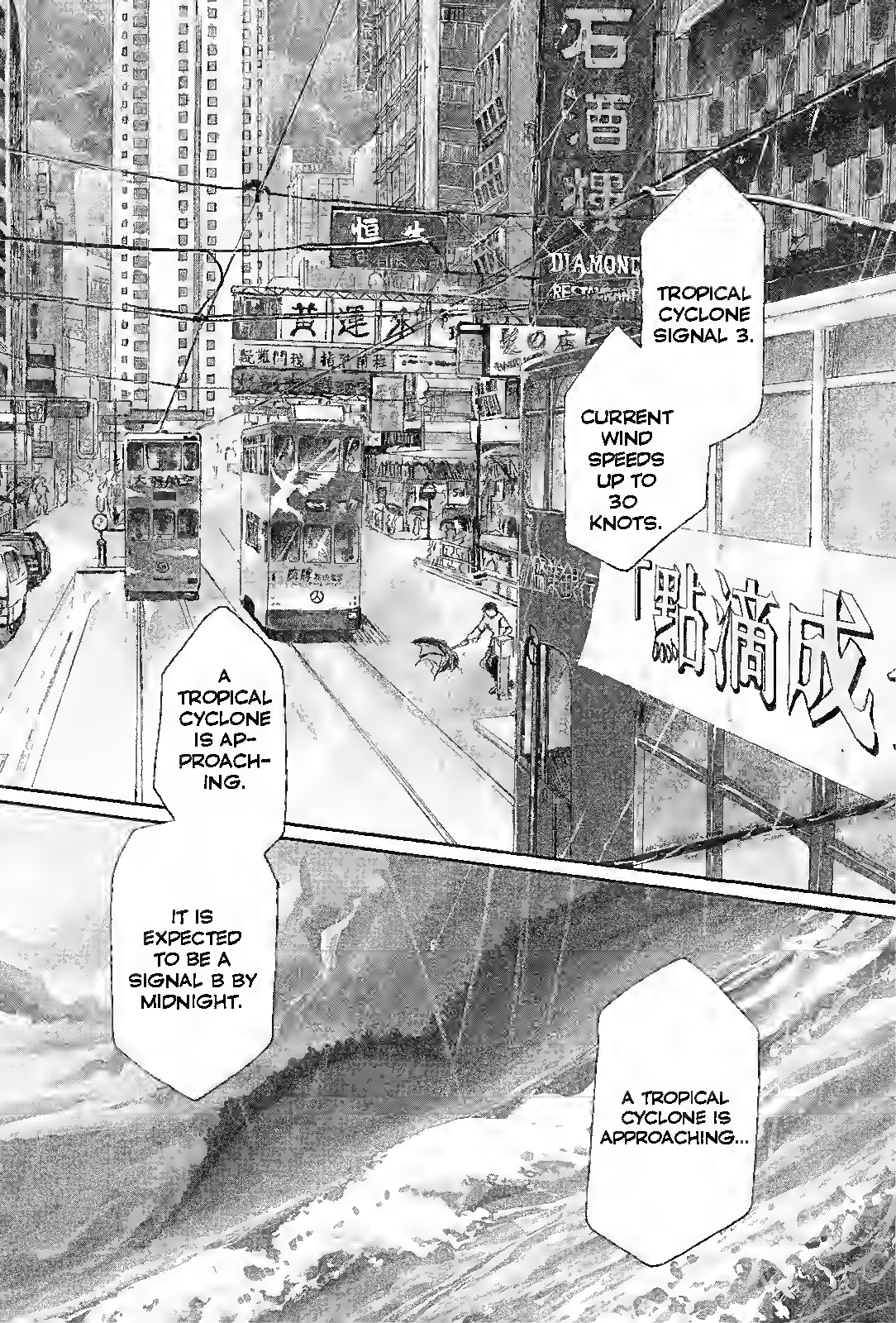
I'M NOT KIDDING!
YOU'D BETTER LEARN TO APOL-OGIZE...
...IF YOU WANT TO GET ANYWHERE IN LIFE!
I WANT TO MAKE SOMETHING ABSOLUTELY CLEAR RIGHT NOW.
YOU CAN'T RAISE A CHILD BY TIP-TOEING AROUND HIM!
I DON'T LIKE PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE.
BUT I'LL DO IT IF I HAVE TO. I'M NOT A WILTING VIOLET.
NO SURPRISE THERE...
HA-HA-HA!
SO, YOU'RE MY KID BROTHER FROM NOW ON! GOOD LUCK!

YOU STUPID UGLY COW!
.....
.....
HM?
YOU AREN'T MY SISTER!
DON'T...
DON'T EVER TOUCH ME...
...OR I'LL KILL YOU!

I'LL LOOK AFTER HIM MYSELF.
LET HIM GO!
WHOOOSH
H-HEY!
WAIT!
HMM.
SO, HE DOESN'T LIKE TO BE TOUCHED.
PRETTY BOLD FOR HIS AGE, THOUGH.
ROSA-LITE...?
LET'S LEAVE HIM ALONE FOR A WHILE.
HE'S JUST A KID...
...BUT, HE CAN'T CRY UNLESS HE'S ALONE.
IT'S SAD.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO MAKE HIM SMILE?
THREE YEARS?
.....
OH, NO.
I MUST HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP.
I SMELL MEAT AGAIN!
CARNO, YOU IDIOT!

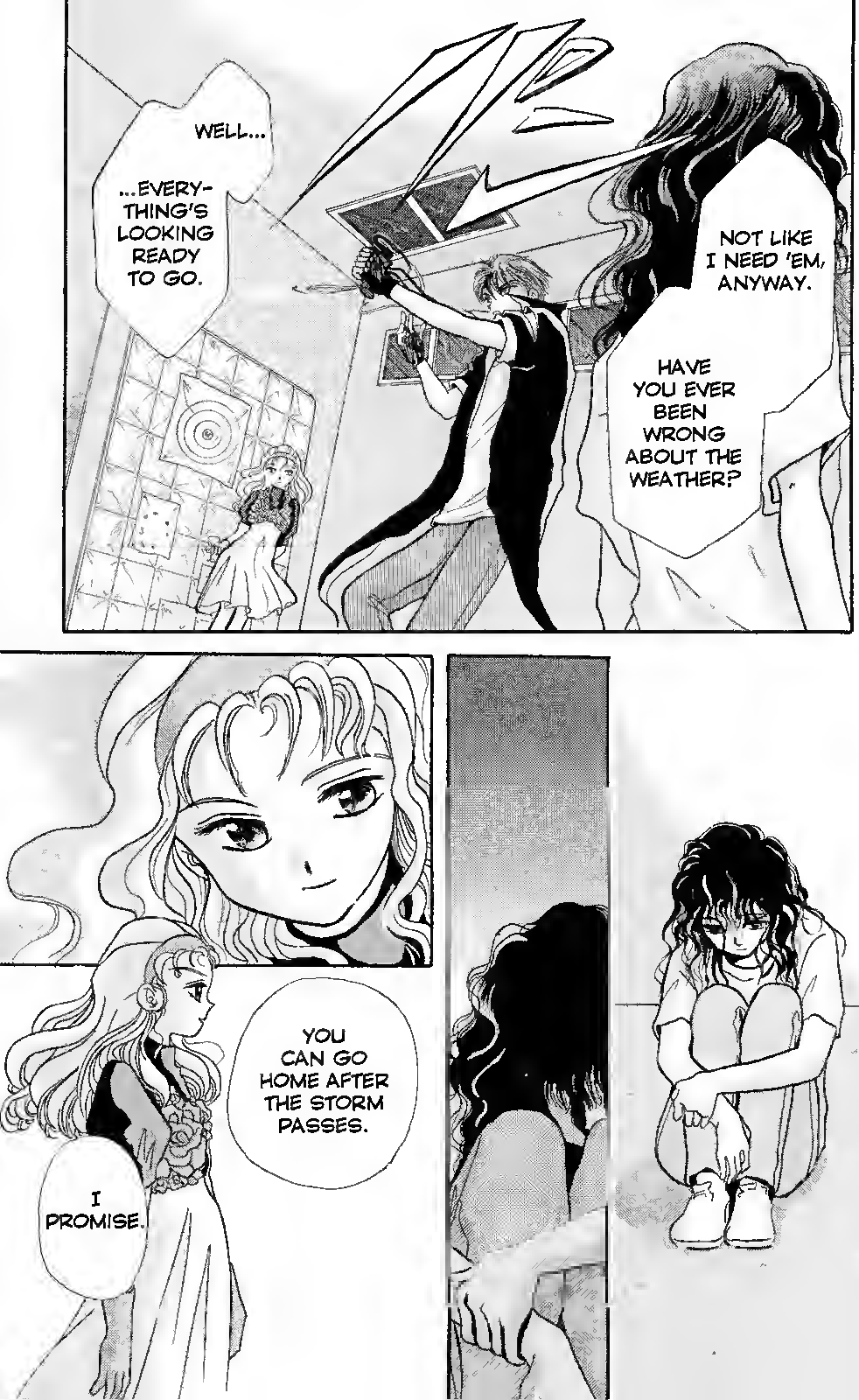
WSSSSSSSH
RATTLE
RATTLE
ガタ
ガタ
RATTLE
ガタ
MUNCH
MUNCH
THERE'S A STORM COMING.
YEAH. RIGHT BEHIND YOU.


TROPICAL CYCLONE SIGNAL 3.
CURRENT WIND SPEEDS UP TO 30 KNOTS.
A TROPICAL CYCLONE IS APPROACHING.
IT IS EXPECTED TO BE A SIGNAL 8 BY MIDNIGHT.
A TROPICAL CYCLONE IS APPROACHING...

世界書局
UNITED
samsonite
DENMARK
DEISEL

CLATTER
CLATTER
ガラ
A STORM'S COMING HUH?
WHAT'S THIS SIGNAL 3 THING ABOUT?
NO BIG DEAL
BASICALLY IT'S JUST A WARNING THAT A TYPHOON IS COMING.
A SIGNAL 3 MEANS THE PORT AND ALL THE SCHOOLS ARE SHUT DOWN.
THEY CAN BE PRETTY DANGEROUS WHEN THE NUMBER GETS HIGHER.

HONG KONG IS A CITY OF TYPHOONS.
I SUPPOSE YOU MIGHT CALL THAT A BIG DEAL.
.....
THEY'RE GRADED IN "SIGNALS" FROM ONE TO TEN.
DURING THE SUMMER YOU'VE GOT TO WATCH THE TYPHOON REPORTS IN THE PAPERS EVERYDAY.
WOOO


WELL...
...EVERY-THING'S LOOKING READY TO GO.
NOT LIKE I NEED 'EM, ANYWAY.
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN WRONG ABOUT THE WEATHER?
YOU CAN GO HOME AFTER THE STORM PASSES.
I PROMISE.

WHAT ARE YOU?
WE'RE MAGI-CIANS.
I DON'T UNDER-STAND.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND, EITHER.
THAT'S NOT ALL RIGHT.
WHY?
I'VE NEVER LIKED OUR WORLD.
AND IT'S NOT LIKE I'M ANY GOOD AT IT.
YOU THINK SO, HUH?

"REGYS."
CRACK
MY DEAR SPIRITS...
THAT'S YOUR TRUE NAME. REGYS.
IT'S ABOUT TIME.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANYONE RIGHT NOW.
YOU'VE GOT TO TRY TO MAKE FRIENDS.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.
YOU DON'T EVEN TRY TO KNOW YOURSELF.
CRACK
HOW CAN YOU KNOW HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE...
...IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND YOURSELF?
CARNO.
mmm!
ARE YOU SURE...
...YOU REALLY CAN'T SEE ANYTHING?

WHOOOOOOOOOSH!
教煌圖

?!
THE ROOF IS COLLAPS-ING.
DAMN! I THOUGHT YOU SAID A SIGNAL 3 WAS NO BIG DEAL!
SO, WHY'S THE ROOF BLOWN OFF?
IT WAS A SIGNAL 3. NOW IT'S A SIGNAL 8.

DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?
CAN'T YOU SEE *WHAT* I'M DOING HERE?

I NEVER SAW ANY-THING!
I CAN'T SEE ANY-THING!
I NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE THAT!
BUT, AM I SURE.
THE POOL.
THE FOR-GOTTEN DREAMS.
A WHISPER.
DON'T LISTEN.
A WHISPER...
SOMEBODY IS WHISPERING TO ME.
THE SMELL OF SULFUR.
DON'T LISTEN TO THE WHISPERING.
A ROTTEN SMELL.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE "THINGS" GATHERING AROUND YOU.
ALWAYS.
YOU CAN'T LIVE LIKE A NORMAL PERSON...
...NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY.
HYMAN!
...AM I...?!
I AM...
WHO ARE... YOU?

THIS CAGE OF YOURS...
...IT GOES REALLY, REALLY DEEP.
.....
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU HATE BEING A MAGICIAN.
I WISH I COULD SET YOU FREE.
BUT, I UNDER-STAND.
IT ISN'T EASY TO REMEMBER.
MY HAIR AND NAILS GROW...
...BUT ONLY IF I CUT THEM FIRST.
LIKE ME. ONE DAY, MY BODY STOPPED GROWING.
BUT, I CAN'T...
...AND YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY FROM THE TRUTH.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME GOES BY...
...MY HAIR AND NAILS STOP GROWING AT A CERTAIN LENGTH.
I GUESS THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS.
NOBODY CAN CHANGE THE FACT.
THIS IS WHAT I AM.
I STILL HAVEN'T FIGURED IT OUT YET.
AND NOBODY CAN HELP ME.
I LEFT MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO JOIN THE GUINO CLAN.
I STILL WONDER OF THIS VERY DAY.
WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE LIKE THIS?
I ALWAYS WONDERED.

BUT, YOU KNOW, CARNO...
...I'M STILL PROUD OF MYSELF.
BECAUSE I KNOW...
.....
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD, CARNO.
...BECAUSE I KNOW YOU CARE ABOUT ME.

YOU ALWAYS TOLD ME NOT TO WORRY ABOUT IT.
DIDN'T YOU?
YOU MAKE ME FEEL GOOD.
YOU MAKE ME SMILE.
I KNOW YOU ALWAYS HOLD BACK AROUND ME.
.....
YOU NEVER DID BEFORE.
YOU'RE CRAZY.
YOU'VE CHANGED, CARNO.

PRETTY GOOD FOR A CRAPPY MAGICIAN!
ARE YOU SURE YOU AREN'T HOLDING OUT ON ME?
NO, MA'AM.
YOU'RE NO FUN!
I'M NO GOOD AT LEVITATION! BUT, LOOK AT YOU!
YOU'RE GROWING LIKE A WEED.
GUESS THAT'S WHY YOU'VE GOTTEN SO GOOD!
H-HUH?!

YOU'RE HOLDING BACK FOR MY SAKE, CARNO.
GUESS YOU'RE MORE CONFIDENT THAN I THOUGHT.
SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE...
...LIKE WE'RE MORE THAN SISTER AND BROTHER.
SHE PLAYS FOR KEEPS.
A WOMAN OF ETERNITY.

HE MAY BE HOPELESS AS A MAGICIAN...
...BUT, HE'S MY FAVORITE PERSON...
...IN THE WHOLE WORLD.
FIGHT FOR ME, CARNO.
I HAVE FAITH IN YOU.
YOU WON'T LOSE.
YOU CAN'T LOSE...
WE'RE ALIKE, YOU AND I.
...AND WE BOTH KNOW IT.
WE'VE HAD IT HARD SINCE THE DAY WE WERE BORN...

...BUT, IT DOESN'T MATTER...
...WHAT YOU'RE BORN WITH.
IT ONLY MATTERS WHAT YOU DO WITH IT.

YOU KNOW...
...I *FEEL* SOMETHING, THOUGH.
TAK
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?
I CAN'T SEE A *DAMN* THING!
SO...
...SEE ANY-THING?
HMM.
OH, IT'S YOU.

THANKS FOR DINNER.
TIME FOR ME TO PAY YOU BACK.
JUST STAY HERE, OKAY?
SSSSSSSHHHHHHHH!
!!

"RAISING ONE'S MAGICAL POWER."
CORRECT!
THAT WAS TOO EASY.
IT LOOKS LIKE MY NECKLACE!
MY WESTERN MAGIC HAS AN EASTERN FEEL HERE. KIND OF LIKE THE CITY ITSELF.
HEH.
OKAY, WHAT'S THIS MAGIC CIRCLE CALLED?
SATURN?
WHAT'S IT FOR?
YOU CAN PLAY COOL, BUT I'M STILL THE SPELL-MASTER!
THE SPIRITS HERE ARE TOO COOL FOR THEIR OWN GOOD.

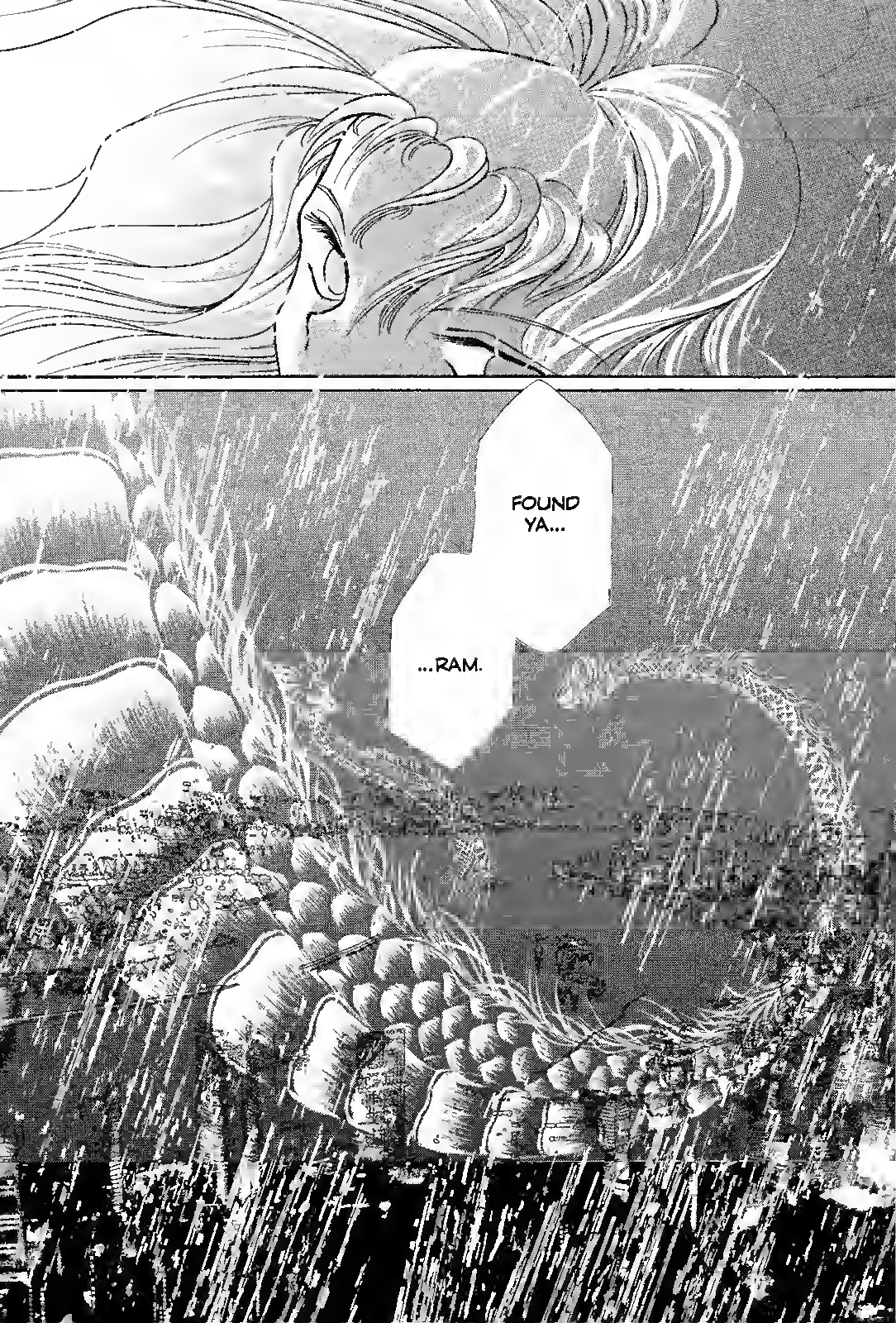
KA-SHAA!
SWSSSSSSH
!!
STAY AWAY FROM THE WIN-DOWS... ...SHER-LOCK.
I THINK... ...WE'D BETTER GO.
YES, YOU SHOULD.

IF POSSIBLE...
...WE'D LIKE TO CONTINUE RETAINING YOUR SERVICES.
YOU ARE A TALENTED MAN.
WE LOOK FORWARD TO IT.
WHEN WILL YOU KNOW THE RESULTS OF YOUR DIVINATION?
IN A FEW DAYS. I'M SURE OF IT.
AS YOU WISH.
I WAS BORN WITH THIS TALENT.
I WANT TO USE IT FOR THE GOOD OF THE WORLD.
PLEASE BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY HOME.

SSSSSSSSSSH!
THE WIND SPIRITS ARE ACTING UP TODAY.
AND AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE WILL BE DROPPING BY TO STIR THINGS UP EVEN MORE.
CAN THE GUINO AEROMANCER CONTROL WINDS OF THIS STRENGTH?
POWERFUL!
IT'S JUST MANIPULATING NATURAL FORCES.
I'M FORTUNATE SHE LOWERED HER GUARD THAT DAY... I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TOUCH HER OTHERWISE.
WELL WITHIN THE CAPABILITIES OF A WITCH LIKE HER.

HER STOMACH WAS AS TINY AS A KID'S.
RIPPING HER WAS NO FUN, THOUGH.
THE WINDS ARE QUITE STRONG IN THE HARBOR.
CAUTION IS ADVISED.
I STILL REMEMBER WHEN THE GARAGE GOT FLOODED LAST YEAR.
REMEMBER? NINE ROLLS-ROYCES GOT DAMAGED.
I HEARD THE WIND BLEW OFF THE NEIGHBOR'S ROOF.
BETTER MOVE THE KID'S BED AWAY FROM THE WINDOW.
YEAH, YEAH!
THAT WAS SOME-THING ELSE.
IT ALMOST HAS A LIFE OF ITS OWN.
THIS WEATHER IS INTENSE.

I GET IT.
SO, SHE WANTS TO USE THE WATER, HUH?
FINE BY ME


FOUND YA...
...RAM.

HONG KONG'S GETTING ROUGH THESE DAYS.
KLIK!
WORD IS, THE GUINO CLAN IS HAVING A LITTLE "FAMILY PROBLEM."
I SEE.
THE GUINO CLAN, HUH?

SHAAAAAAAAA!

WSSSSHHHHHH!
CARNO!
YOU"VE GOT TO GO!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF RAM'S MAGIC FROM HERE.
GO AHEAD AND MAKE YOUR HUMAN OCTOPUS.

SSSSSSSHHH!
MY DRAGON WILL LEAD YOU TO HIM.
IF YOU CAN'T SEE IT, FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS.
UH...
MY INSTINCTS?
.....
CARNO...!
.....

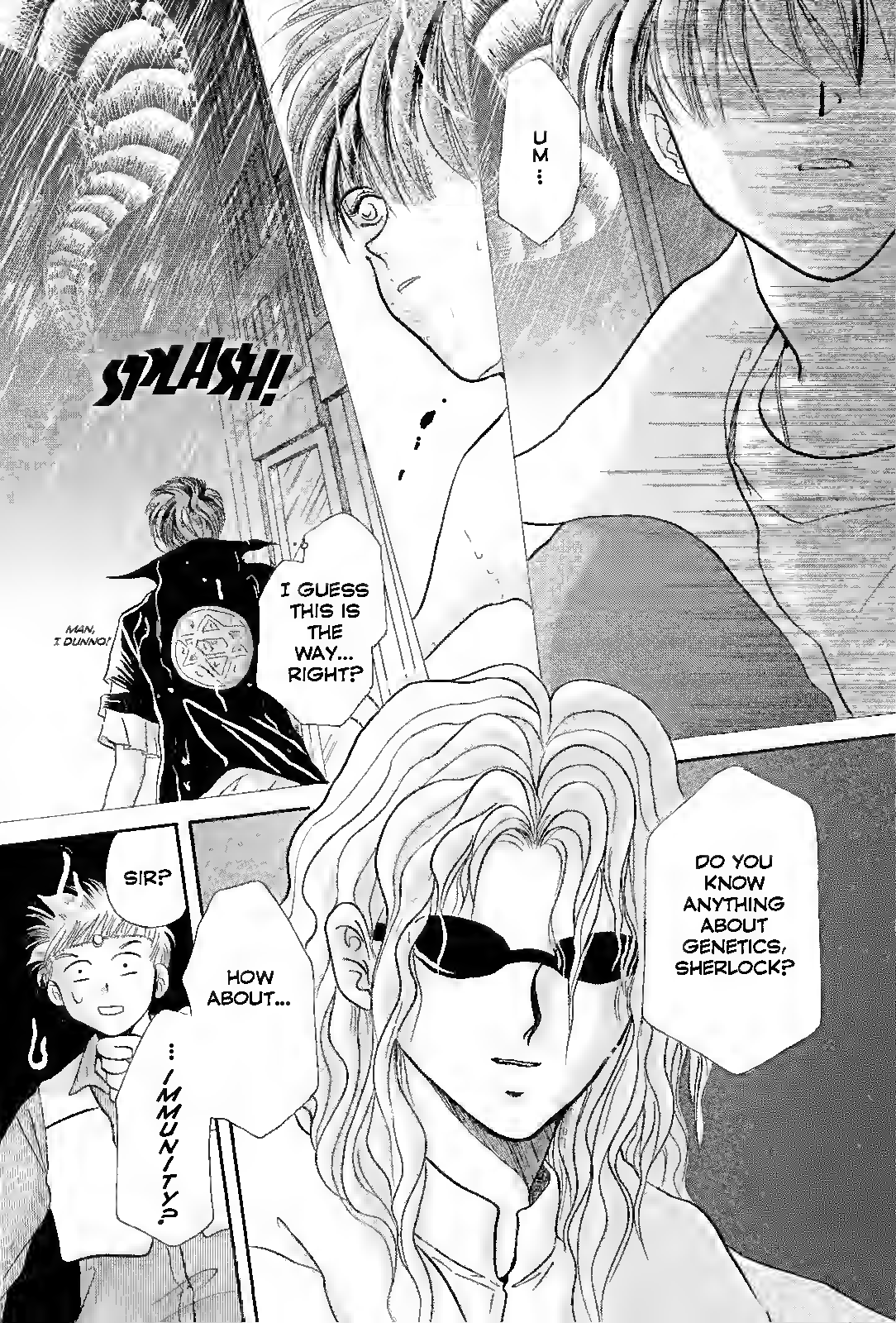
GOOD LUCK!
NOW AND FOR-EVER...
NOW...
...AND FOREVER.
BUT...
YOU HEARD ABOUT ME, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU'RE A GOOD KID.
...NEITHER OF US LIKES CRYING IN FRONT OF PEOPLE.
YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU?

YOU'VE BEEN PRETENDING YOU DIDN'T KNOW.
...ACTED ANY DIFFERENTLY AROUND ME.
YOU NEVER...
I ALWAYS LOVED THAT ABOUT YOU.
AH...!
GAH!
THUD!
WHAT HAP-PENED?
I'M FINE.
ARE YOU OKAY?
COUGH!
COUGH COUGH

I-I'M OKAY.
NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT ANYWAY.
IT'S MY OWN FAULT FOR BEING NAIVE.
I REMEMBER THE DAY WE MET, SHERLOCK.
IT WAS DURING A STORM JUST LIKE THIS.
IT WAS, MASTER.
THE WIND'S GETTING STRONGER AND STRONGER.
I'LL BE FINE SO LONG AS I DON'T LOWER MY GUARD.

I REMEMBER YOU LAUGHED AT MY MAGIC ABILITIES, MASTER.
I WAS SO ANGRY.
BUT, I'VE BEEN YOUR DEVOUT DISCIPLE EVER SINCE.
LAUGHED? I ADMIRED YOUR SPIRIT.
THE GUINO MAGICIANS...
THE CLAN WAS ONLY INTERESTED IN STUDY. THEY WERE LIKE HERMITS.
THEY MAY WELL HAVE CHANGED SINCE THEY ABANDONED ME...
...BUT I REMEMBER ONE THING VERY CLEARLY.

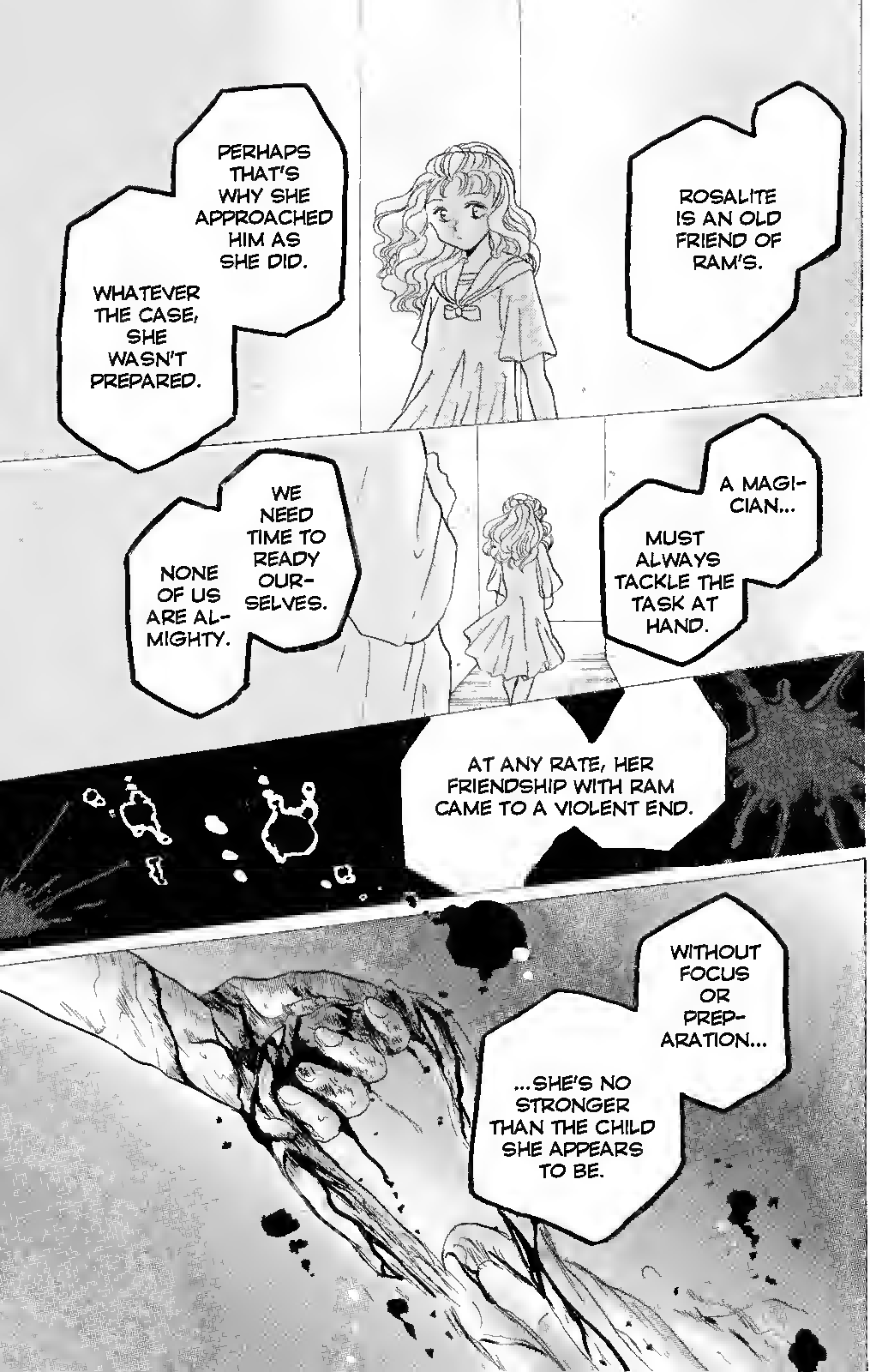
...I'VE BEEN ALWAYS FASCINATED BY THE SUPER-NATURAL.
AS HAVE I.
THE MYSTERY OF IT ALL HAS ALWAYS HELD GREAT INTEREST.
I HEARD THE GUINOS ARE GREAT MAGICIANS.
IS HE GOOD, TOO?
IS HE LIKE YOU?
I CAN'T BE PERFECTLY CERTAIN, BUT...
WSSSSH!
UHH... SO, WHICH WAY I SHOULD I GO?
ALL RIGHT.
FOLLOW MY INSTINCTS, HUH?


UM…
SPLASH!
I GUESS THIS IS THE WAY… RIGHT?
MAN, I DUNNO!
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT GENETICS, SHERLOCK?
SIR?
HOW ABOUT…
…IMMUNITY?

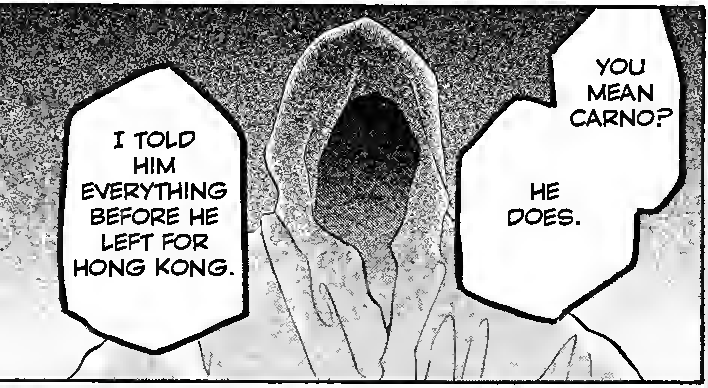
I BELIEVE THAT BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN...
...IS WHAT IS CALLED A "RECIPIENT."
THE GUINO CLAN TOOK HIM IN TEN YEARS AGO FOR STUDY.
IF I RECALL, THAT'S WHAT THEY USE HIM AS.
A RECIPIENT.
.....
A...
A LAB RAT...?
IN OTHER WORDS, HE'S THEIR LAB RAT.

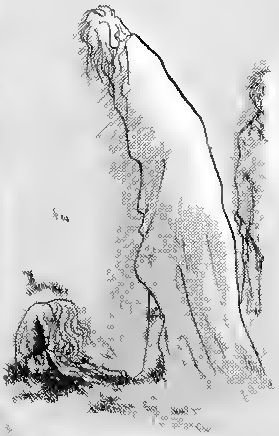
AS A MAGICIAN, ANYWAY.
HE'S USELESS.
I SEE.
.....
NO MATTER HOW TALENTED AN INDIVIDUAL MAY BE...
MAGIC IS A SKILL THAT MUST BE EARNED THROUGH PERSER-VERANCE AND HARD WORK.
...HE'LL NEVER MASTER MAGIC WITHOUT A PASSION FOR STUDYING.
IT'S LIKE A CRAFT.

I HEARD ROSALITE DIED.
NOT YET...
...BUT, SHE WILL SOON.
HER STOMACH IS A REPLICA, MADE OF ASH.
AS I UNDERSTAND IT, ERNEST RAM HAS ALLIED WITH THE CHINESE GOVERN-MENT.
HE LEAKED MANY OF THE GUINO CLAN SECRETS TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED US.
WE WOULD HAVE TAKEN CARE OF HIM AT ONCE.
HE DISGRACED US.
WE MUST MAKE HIM PAY.
I UNDER-STAND.


ROSALITE IS AN OLD FRIEND OF RAM'S.
PERHAPS THAT'S WHY SHE APPROACHED HIM AS SHE DID.
WHATEVER THE CASE, SHE WASN'T PREPARED.
A MAGICIAN... MUST ALWAYS TACKLE THE TASK AT HAND.
WE NEED TIME TO READY OURSELVES.
NONE OF US ARE ALMIGHTY.
AT ANY RATE, HER FRIENDSHIP WITH RAM CAME TO A VIOLENT END.
WITHOUT FOCUS OR PREPARATION...
...SHE'S NO STRONGER THAN THE CHILD SHE APPEARS TO BE.

THE DAY THEY MET, HE TOLD ROSALITE THAT HE COULD FREE HER FROM A CURSE...





IT ISN'T...
SPLASH
...ABOUT USING YOUR SOUL.
UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF
SPLASH
UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS.
SPLASH
IT ISN'T ABOUT USING YOUR BRAIN, EITHER.

HE IS SPECIAL.
HE IS A CHIMERA.
YOU SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN...
...THAT HE ISN'T A NORMAL HUMAN BEING.

KRACK

...WHEN I THINK ABOUT HIS BLOOD...
WHEN I THINK ABOUT MY ENEMY...
HEH, HEH.
HEY, I FEEL GREAT!
...I CAN'T HELP LAUGHING.
...WHEN I THINK ABOUT HIS FLESH...

I KNOW WHERE YOU ARE, SICKO.
I JUST CAN'T... STOP... LAUGHING!
EVERY HUMAN CELL CONTAINS A STRAND OF D.N.A. WITH 46 CHROMOSOMES.
EACH CHROMO-SOME CONTAINS SOME 50,000 PAIRS OF GENES...
...WHICH IN TURN FUNCTION AS A BLUEPRINT FOR THE HUMAN BODY.

WE'VE LONG BE-LIEVED...
...THAT THERE MUST BE SOME ANALOG FOR THE HUMAN SOUL.
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT BIOLOGY, THEN.
I THINK...!
CHROMO-SOMES AND GENES ARE STILL A RECENT DISCOVERY.
THEY WERE FOUND LESS THAN 100 YEARS AGO.
BUT, WE THINK IT TAKES A MUCH MORE COMPLICATED FORM THAN CHROMO-SOMES AND GENES.
WE CALL THEM "SCIOSOMES" --BLUEPRINTS FOR THE HUMAN SOUL.

EVERY MAGICIAN HAS DIFFERENT ABILITIES. WE THINK THAT'S DUE TO THE VARIATIONS OF SCIOSOMES.
SO, MAGIC CAN BE INHERITED?
BUT, NEITHER OF MY PARENTS WERE MAGICIANS.
A CHILD DOESN'T INHERIT THE FULL AMOUNT OF GENETIC MATERIAL FROM BOTH PARENTS. ONLY A RANDOM SELECTION.
ROUGHLY HALF OF EACH PARENT'S GENETIC INFORMATION IS DISCARDED.
SO, THE LARGER THE NUMBER OF A PERSON'S DESCENDENTS, THE MORE OF THE ORIGINAL GENETIC CODE GETS DISCARDED.
MEANING THE CHANCE OF FINDING ANYONE WITH A CODE IDENTICAL TO YOURS IS MINIMAL.
EVEN AMONG CLOSE FAMILY MEMBERS.

I GET IT...
...I THINK?
TO FOLLOW THE THEORY TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION.
THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN INDIVIDUALS WITH EXTRAORDINARY ABILITIES. RARE ABILITIES. ONE OF A KIND ABILITIES.
THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE TEMPLAR KNIGHTS: REVI.
THE PERSIAN SWORD, SCHEHERAZADE.
THE SECRET FLOWER OF SOUTH ASIA: RAFFIA.
THE 13TH CENTURY HERO, STILL ALIVE TODAY: ARC.
BUT, EVEN THESE INDIVIDUALS WERE THE RESULT OF RANDOM SELECTION.
LIKE A MILLION DICE THROWN INTO THE AIR AND LANDING ON ALL THE SAME NUMBERS.

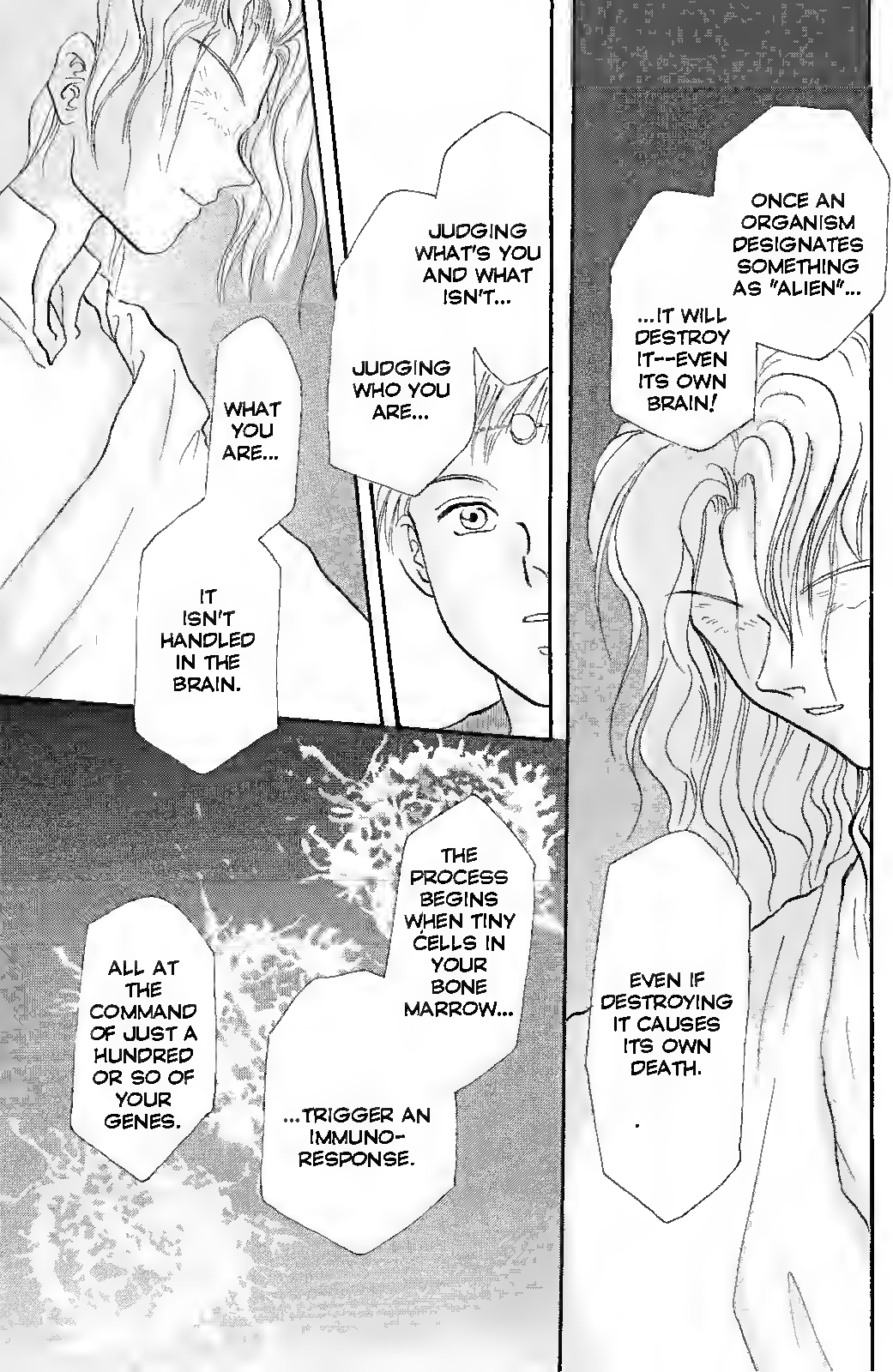
AND OUR FAVORITE BOY IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE.
.....
THIS IS GOING TO GET COMPLI-CATED.
DO TRY TO KEEP UP, SHERLOCK.
HIS EXCELLENCY IS ALREADY IN BED.
I MUST SEE HIS EXCELLENCY, REVI!
JUST TELL HIM I AM HERE.
MANNERS, HYMAN!
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO STOP ME WITHOUT TELLING HIM FIRST.

SUPPOSE SOMEONE CLAIMS TO BE POSSESSED BY A DEMON.
THEN AN EXORCIST PURGES IT.
HOW CAN THE EXORCIST SEPARATE THE TWO DIFFERENT ENTITIES?
IN ORDER FOR IT TO WORK ALL SIDES HAVE TO AGREE ON A VERY IMPORTANT POINT.

EVEN IF ONE LEAVES THEIR CORPOREAL FORM AND BECOMES A PURE SPIRIT...
...IT'S DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO FULLY 'FUSE' WITH ANOTHER SOUL.
KLIK, KLIK
YOUR EXCELLENCY REVI.
I APOLOGIZE FOR BOTHERING YOU.
BUT, THANK YOU FOR SEEING ME AT THIS HOUR.

HYMAN.
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.
YOUR BODY AND MINE ARE COMPOSED OF IDENTICAL...
...ELEMENTS AND SUBSTANCES.
IN FACT, THE SAME IS TRUE FOR EVERY HUMAN.
MANKIND IS BUILT OF THE SAME MATERIALS DESPITE OUR DIFFERENCES IN APPEARANCE.

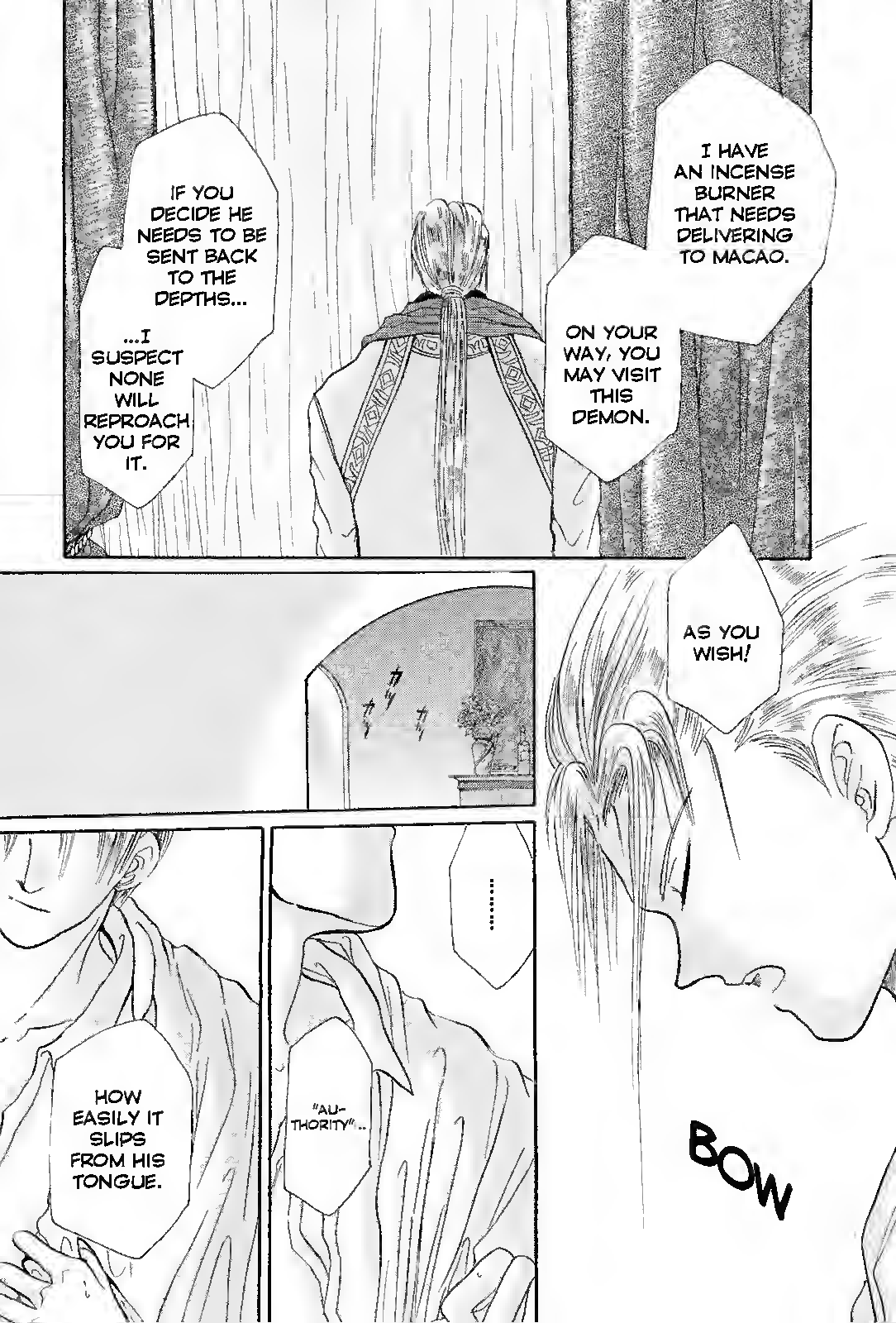
YET, IF I PEELED OFF MY SKIN AND STICHED IT TO YOUR BODY,
IT WOULD ROT AWAY.
WHY? BECAUSE YOUR BODY RECOGNIZES IT AS FOREIGN.
IT REJECTS IT.
LISTEN.
SCIENTISTS CREATED HYBRID CHICKEN EMBRYOS WITH THE BRAINS OF QUAILS.
THE CHICKS HATCHED NORMALLY AND TRIED TO LIVE LIKE QUAILS.
BUT, SOON THEY GREW LETHARGIC AND SLEEPY.
WITHIN TEN DAYS, ALL WERE DEAD.
THE CHICKENS' BODIES REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE QUAIL BRAINS. THEY ATTACKED AND DESTROYED THEM.


ONCE AN ORGANISM DESIGNATES SOMETHING AS "ALIEN"...
...IT WILL DESTROY IT--EVEN ITS OWN BRAIN!
EVEN IF DESTROYING IT CAUSES ITS OWN DEATH.
JUDGING WHAT'S YOU AND WHAT ISN'T...
JUDGING WHO YOU ARE...
WHAT YOU ARE...
IT ISN'T HANDLED IN THE BRAIN.
THE PROCESS BEGINS WHEN TINY CELLS IN YOUR BONE MARROW...
...TRIGGER AN IMMUNO-RESPONSE.
ALL AT THE COMMAND OF JUST A HUNDRED OR SO OF YOUR GENES.

HE SEEMS TO BE GETTING CLOSER.
CLASS IS OVER FOR TODAY.
SNICKER
WHAT'S THIS?
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
UH...I THINK?
THE WINDS ARE KEEPING THEIR DISTANCE AS WELL.
ALL OF US...
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, ROSALITE?

MY BELOVED ROSALITE...
IT'S TRUE.
ALL OF US ARE BORN IN THE SAME WAY.
ALL OF US ARE LONELY IN THE SAME WAY.
BUT, THAT'S JUST HOW IT IS.
I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
WHEN I KILL YOU WITH MY OWN HANDS...
...OUR ECSTASY WILL FAR EXCEED THAT OF MERE PHYSICAL INTERCOURSE...

I HAVEN'T HEARD OF ANY DEMON IN HONG KONG.
.....
SUBJU-GATION?
I'M AFRAID TO CORRECT YOU, YOUR EXCELLENCY.
AND THERE'S NO TIME TO CONVENE AN INQUISITION.
ONE WILL APPEAR. I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT.
.....
I HUMBLY BEG PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT THE SUBJUGATION UNDER YOUR AUTHORITY, EXCELLENCY.


I HAVE AN INCENSE BURNER THAT NEEDS DELIVERING TO MACAO.
ON YOUR WAY, YOU MAY VISIT THIS DEMON.
IF YOU DECIDE HE NEEDS TO BE SENT BACK TO THE DEPTHS...
...I SUSPECT NONE WILL REPROACH YOU FOR IT.
AS YOU WISH!
BOW
.....
"AU-THORITY"...
HOW EASILY IT SLIPS FROM HIS TONGUE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU FORCED YOUR WAY IN!
I TOLD YOU HE HAD TAKEN TO HIS BED!

TAK TAK
IS HE ALL RIGHT?
I WOULDN'T GET ANYTHING DONE IF I TURNED AWAY EVERY TIME HE FELT ILL.
LET HIM WORRY THE MAIDS WITH HIS HEALTH.
IN ANY EVENT, WE REACHED AN AGREE-MENT.
TAK
ASSEMBLE A TEAM OF FIVE.
WE'RE GOING TO HONG KONG.
WILL A DEMON REALLY APPEAR THERE?
IT WILL.
.....
I KNOW IT.
BECAUSE I'M THE ONE WHO FOUND IT.

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG...
...IT WILL BE MY RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE CARE OF IT.
CARNO.
NOW I REMEMBER THE NAME.
HYMAN'S ALWAYS PAID AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF ATTENTION TO HIM.
LET ME GUESS. HE'S A BEAUTIFUL BOY.
ABSTINENCE BREEDS PERVERSION.
THAT'S WHY SO MANY OF YOU MAGICIANS ARE SEXUAL DEVIANTS.

FLIP
.....
.....
A DAMN EATER...
I WONDER.
THE BOY IS HIS TYPE, THOUGH, NO QUESTION.
...A TRAGIC BOY, BY ANY ACCOUNT.
STILL, IF HE FOLLOWS HIS TRUE DESTINY...
...YOU'LL PROBABLY NEVER MEET HIM FACE TO FACE, REVI.

PLEASE EXCUSE ME...
...YOUR EXCEL-LENCY.
YOU'RE AS STRICT AS EVER...
...MY PRIN-CESS.
WERE YOU SPEAKING TO SOMEONE?
NOT AT ALL.
.....
DO YOU WANT TO MEET HIM, REVI?
OH, THE WIND!

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR TRUE NAME?
YOUR OTHER NAME?
YOUR RANK?
.....
I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY WAY I CAN HELP.
BUT, I DON'T WANT HIM TO DIE.

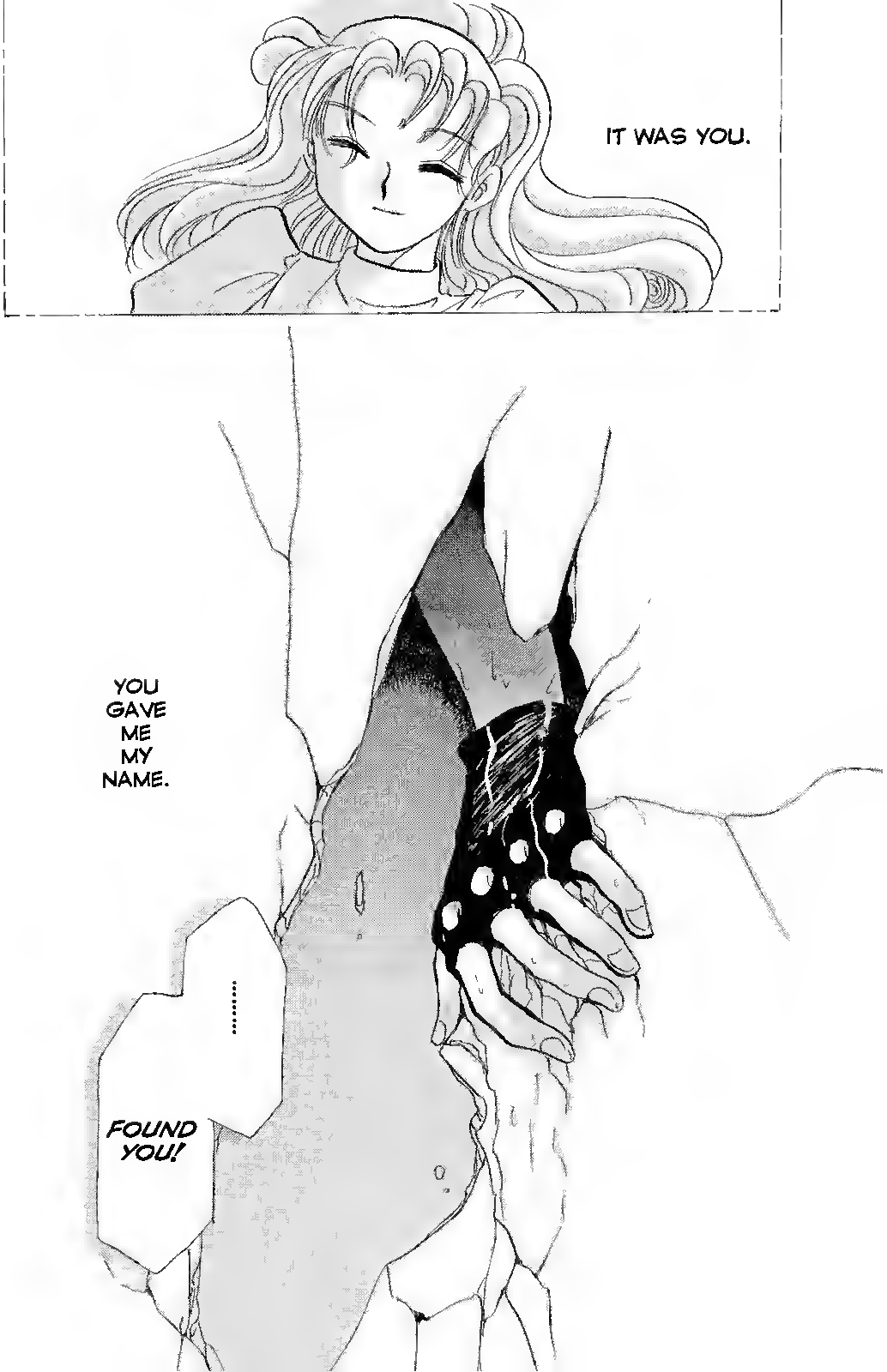
SLAM!
WHAT'S FUSION FEEL LIKE?

SCRE-RRRRIP!
YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM HAS A CONGENITAL DEFECT.

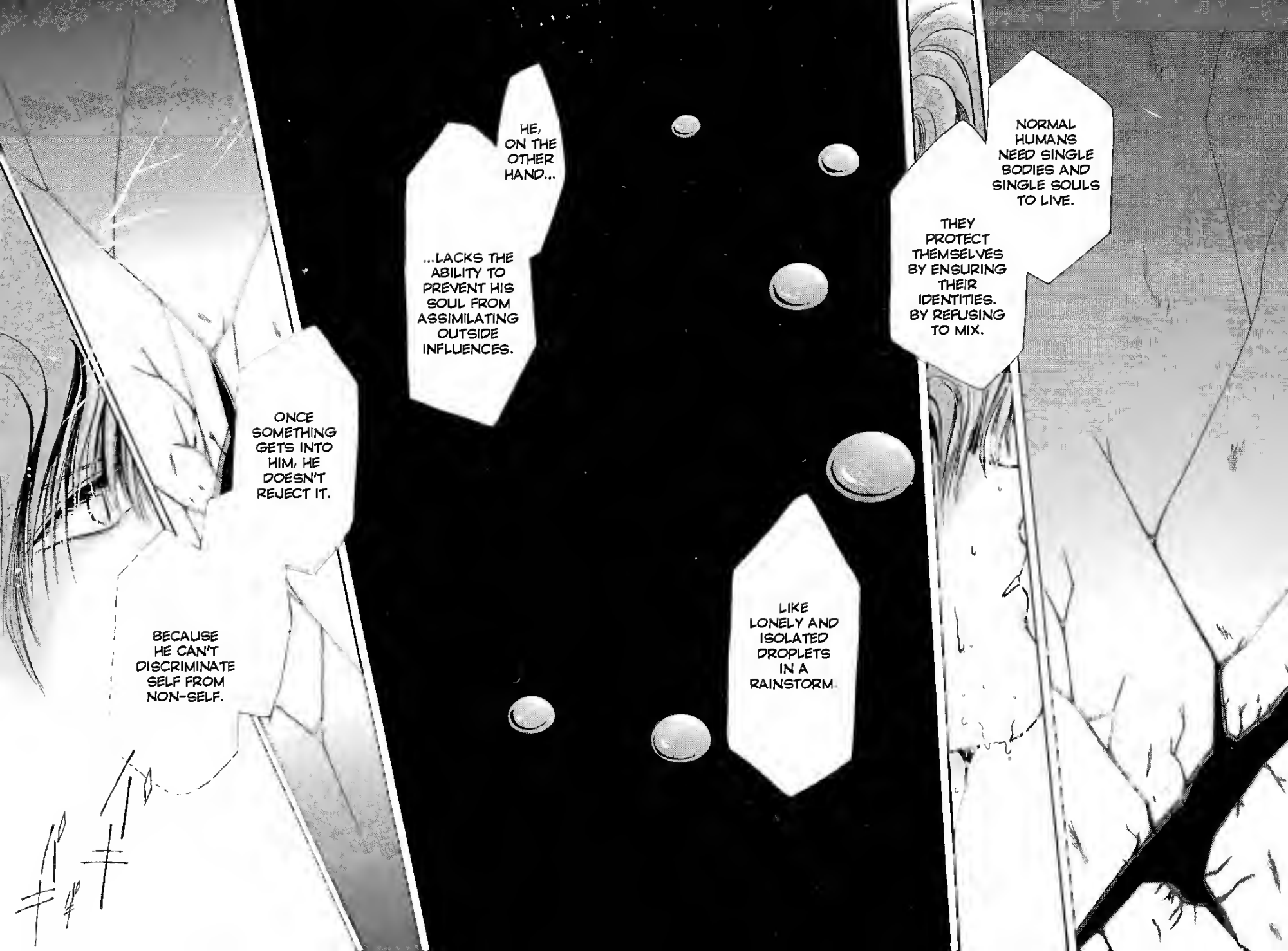
WHEN YOU WERE SEVEN...
...YOU WERE PSYCHO-LOGICALLY TRAUMA-TIZED.
THAT'S WHEN YOU MADE YOUR FIRST CONTACT WITH THE OTHER WORLD.
STEP
STEP
THAT DEMON BECAME YOUR FIRST "DONOR."
BEFORE YOU WERE ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED...
I AM.
...YOU INSTINCTIVELY FUSED WITH IT TO SAVE YOURSELF.
ME.

I AM ME
YOUR SOUL IS INCAPABLE OF DISTINGUISHING YOU...
...FROM OTHERS. OR MONSTERS.
DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?
I DON'T CARE WHO I AM.
I AM ME. ANYONE IS FINE.
IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE...
...TO CONSIDER...
...YOURSELF AS HUMAN NOW?

BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
KRAK!
BAM!
I DON'T CARE WHO I AM!
BAM!
I DON'T GIVE A DAMN AT ALL!
I DON'T CARE.


IT WAS YOU.
YOU GAVE ME MY NAME.
.....
FOUND YOU!

SPLIT!
SPLAT!


NORMAL HUMANS NEED SINGLE BODIES AND SINGLE SOULS TO LIVE.
THEY PROTECT THEMSELVES BY ENSURING THEIR IDENTITIES. BY REFUSING TO MIX.
HE, ON THE OTHER HAND...
...LACKS THE ABILITY TO PREVENT HIS SOUL FROM ASSIMILATING OUTSIDE INFLUENCES.
ONCE SOMETHING GETS INTO HIM, HE DOESN'T REJECT IT.
BECAUSE HE CAN'T DISCRIMINATE SELF FROM NON-SELF.
LIKE LONELY AND ISOLATED DROPLETS IN A RAINSTORM.

...IN OTHER WORDS...
...HE FUSES WITH EVERYTHING
M-MAS--

SPLAT!

SALUT!

HEY.
PARDON ME.
THE HEAD.
I WANTED TO LEAVE IT FOR YA.

LIMB FROM LIMB, HUH?
.....
ARE YOU SATISFIED?
NOT AT ALL.

I WANTED...
...TO MAKE A "HUMAN OCTOPUS."
Y'KNOW, AN OCTOPUS HAS EIGHT LEGS, RIGHT?
I LOVE THIS SMELL.
...YOU'RE A LOT MORE MEAT TO WORK WITH.
I'LL GET IT RIGHT NEXT TIME...

I WAS BORN WITHOUT ANY EYES.
THEY'RE JUST FLAPS OF SKIN.
BUT, I WAS GIFTED WITH POWERFUL EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION.
SO, I CAN SEE YOU AS CLEAR AS DAY.

AND YOU'RE BEAUTI-FUL.
SO, SO BEAUTIFUL.
ALL SPOTTED IN RED.
AND RED.

YOUR FLESH, BLOOD, AND SOUL...
...SING WITH A MIXTURE OF SADNESS AND JOY.
SLAM!

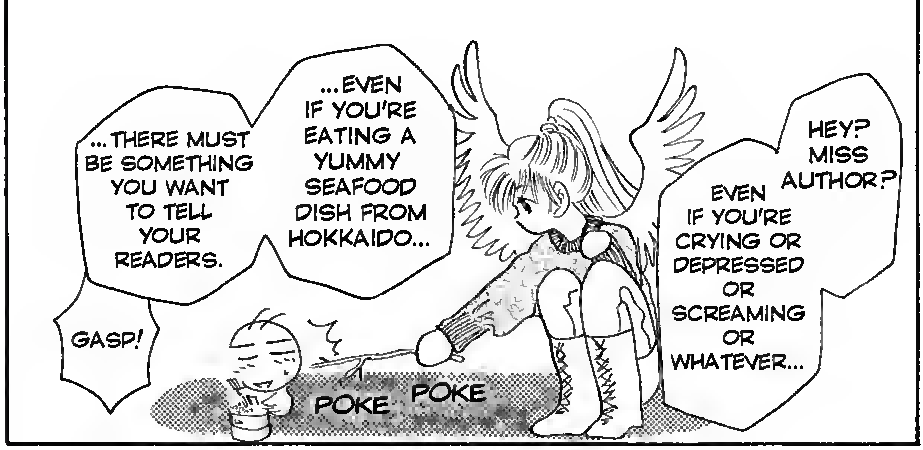
I COMMAND YOU AS YOUR SUPERIOR!
I SUMMON YOU FORTH!
GREAT WATERS! TAKE THE BEAUTY FROM MY ENEMY FROM HIM! SEND HIM TO YOUR BOTTOMLESS DEPTHS OF SUFFERING!
I COMMAND YOU WITH THE SAME POWER AS HE WHO CREATED THE SKY AND THE EARTH!
SSSSSSHHHH
CRUNCH

I AM THE TRUTH.
I AM THE ALL-POWERFUL.
I AM MASTER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.
I WEAR THE SAVIOR'S ARMOR.
GOD'S FACE IS MY OWN.
I COMMAND YOU WHO DWELLS IN THE WATER.
I COMMAND YOU TO COME FORTH AND PLEDGE YOUR OBEDIENCE TO ME.

OH, GREAT WINDS...
.....
...CONSIGN MY ENEMY TO THE BOWELS OF HELL FOR ALL *ETERNITY*!
TO BE CONTINUED IN VOL. 2

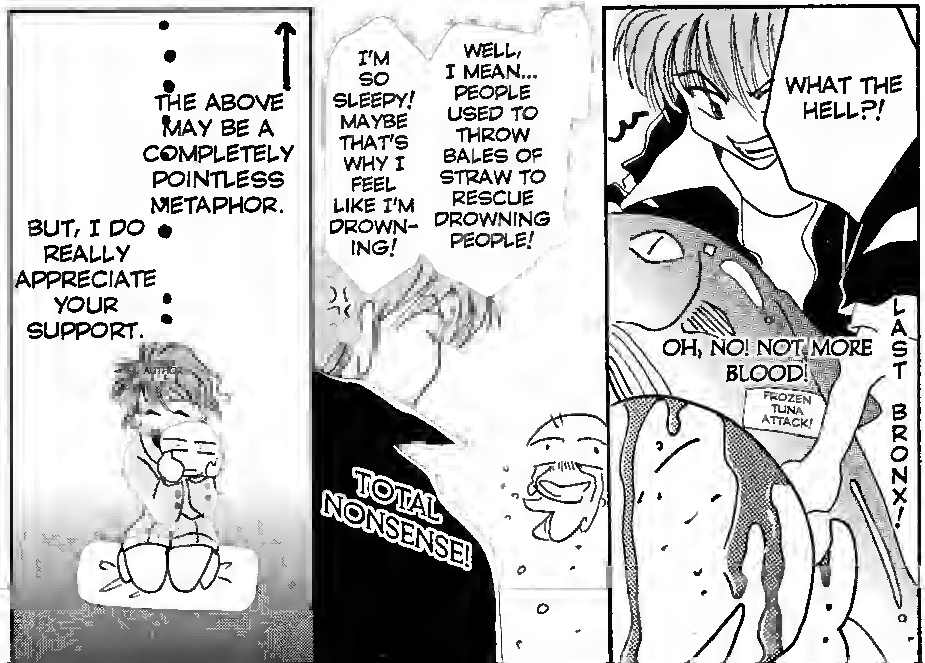
THE
YOUNG MAGICIANS
HEROES

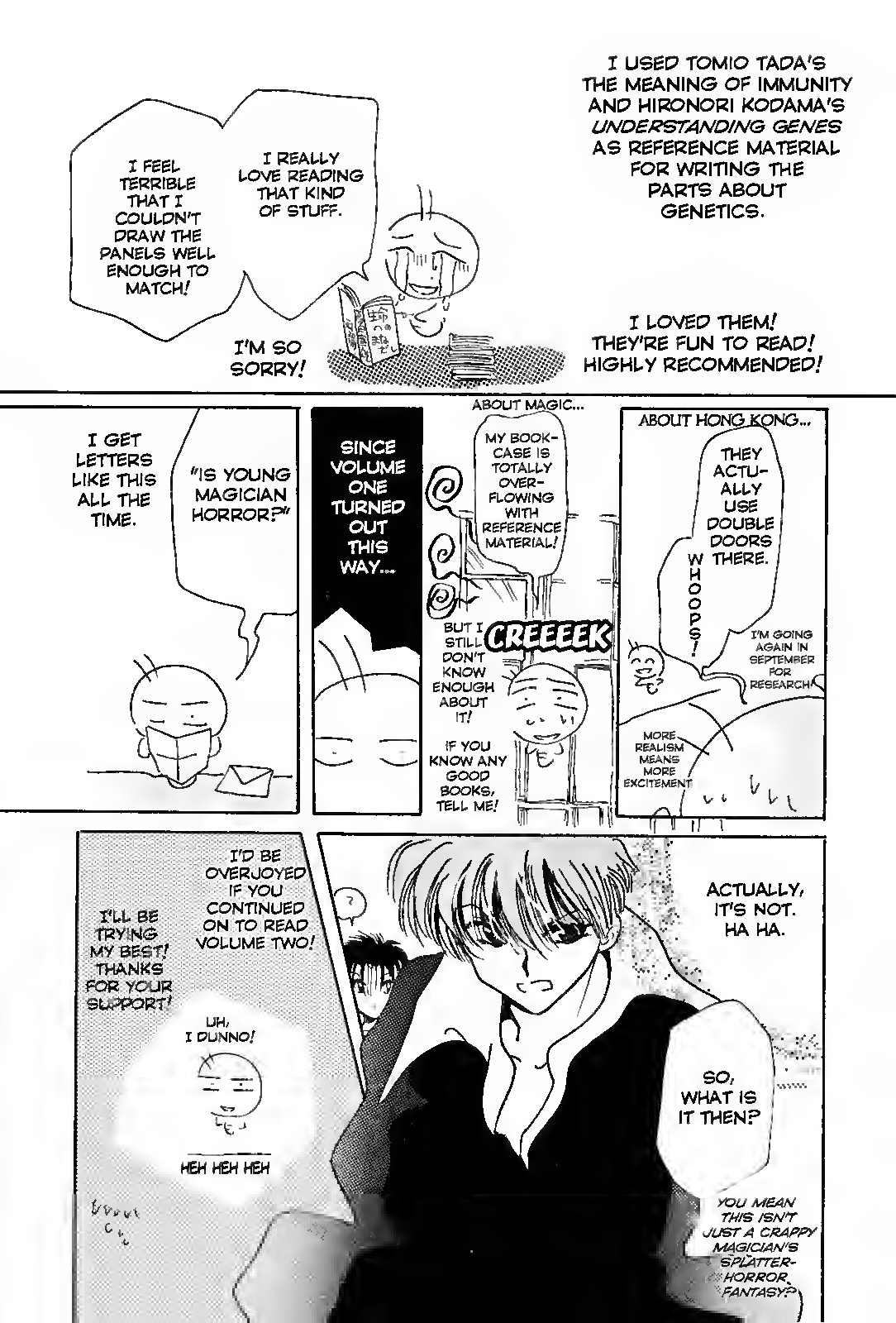
AFTERWORD...OR SOMETHING...
あとがき…とゆーか……
HI! NICE TO MEET YOU!
OH, DON'T MIND ME...
JUST HANGIN' AROUND!
...I'M THE SECOND PROTAG-ONIST, ALTHOUGH THERE'S NO SIGN OF ME IN THE FIRST VOLUME.
...SEE, I'M MAKING THE AUTHOR NERVOUS! AND SOME-ONE ELSE, TOO!
WHO IS THIS GUY?
出羽の鶴
B-B-BUT YOU AREN'T IN THE HONG KONG EPISODE!
DRIP DRIP DRIP DRIP
I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY!
REALLY, REALLY, REALLY!
IT'S OKAY!
ADMITTING YOUR MISTAKES IS GOLDEN!
LETTERS OF ENCOUR-AGEMENT TO THE AUTHOR WELCOMED!
WINGS EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT
THAT'S "SILENCE IS GOLDEN."
黄桜
UH...
HEE HEE HEE! BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD! WHY, ARE MY PANELS SO BLOODY?
DIE! DIE DIE DIE!
STOMP!
.....
MAN, VOLUME ONE IS OUT OF CONTROL!
NOW NO ONE'S GOING TO READ VOLUME TWO ANYWAY.
KINDA GLAD I WASN'T IN IT.
HEY!
越え寒梅


HEY? MISS AUTHOR?
EVEN IF YOU'RE CRYING OR DEPRESSED OR SCREAMING OR WHATEVER...
...EVEN IF YOU'RE EATING A YUMMY SEAFOOD DISH FROM HOKKAIDO...
...THERE MUST BE SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TELL YOUR READERS.
GASP!
POKE POKE

"DEAR READERS...
UM...
UH...

STRAW
YOU'RE... YOU'RE... MY BALES OF STRAW!
UH... TO BE HONEST...


THE ABOVE MAY BE A COMPLETELY POINTLESS METAPHOR.
BUT, I DO REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT.
AUTHOR
I'M SO SLEEPY! MAYBE THAT'S WHY I FEEL LIKE I'M DROWNING!
WELL, I MEAN... PEOPLE USED TO THROW BALES OF STRAW TO RESCUE DROWNING PEOPLE!
TOTAL NONSENSE!
WHAT THE HELL?!
OH, NO! NOT MORE BLOOD!
FROZEN TUNA ATTACK!
LAST BRONX!


I USED TOMIO TADA'S THE MEANING OF IMMUNITY AND HIRONORI KODAMA'S *UNDERSTANDING GENES* AS REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR WRITING THE PARTS ABOUT GENETICS.
I REALLY LOVE READING THAT KIND OF STUFF.
I FEEL TERRIBLE THAT I COULDN'T DRAW THE PANELS WELL ENOUGH TO MATCH!
I'M SO SORRY!
I LOVED THEM! THEY'RE FUN TO READ! HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!
I GET LETTERS LIKE THIS ALL THE TIME.
"IS YOUNG MAGICIAN HORROR?"
SINCE VOLUME ONE TURNED OUT THIS WAY...
ABOUT MAGIC...
MY BOOKCASE IS TOTALLY OVERFLOWING WITH REFERENCE MATERIAL!
BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT IT!
CREEEEK
IF YOU KNOW ANY GOOD BOOKS, TELL ME!
ABOUT HONG KONG...
THEY ACTUALLY USE DOUBLE DOORS THERE.
WHOOPS!
I'M GOING AGAIN IN SEPTEMBER FOR RESEARCH!
MORE REALISM MEANS MORE EXCITEMENT
I'LL BE TRYING MY BEST! THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
I'D BE OVERJOYED IF YOU CONTINUED ON TO READ VOLUME TWO!
UH, I DUNNO!
HEH HEH HEH
?
ACTUALLY, IT'S NOT. HA HA.
SO, WHAT IS IT THEN?
YOU MEAN THIS ISN'T JUST A CRAPPY MAGICIAN'S SPLATTER-HORROR FANTASY?

Coming up in Volume 2 of

THE YOUNG MAGICIAN

SHONEN MAHOU Sen Vol. 2 © 1997 Yuri Narushima/Shinshokan

By Narushima Yuri

Carno continues to combat his mysterious nemesis! The emergent magician's lust for battle allowed him to easily destroy the demon's disciple, but his vast inexperience and leck of formal treining puts him at a grave disadvantage. The demon before him possesses a weapon far more powerful than eny megic—the mystery to Carno's vanished past, and the truth about what really happened to his biological family!

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Published by Shinshokan Publishing Co.,Ltd.
2-19-18, Nishikata 8unkyo-ku, Tokyo, JAPAN
www.shinshokan.co.jp

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